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University — Université: ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée: M.A.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade: 1983

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Pacifism and Politics in Britain in the Inter-War Years

by

©

Heather Bestwick

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Science

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING 1983

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Date 14 December 1982.

For my mother

Abstract

This thesis represents an attempt to assess the role of the peace movement in Britain during the inter-war years, and its impact on British foreign policy during this period. At a time when many are referring to the peace movement of this period, and its responsibility in hastening the onset of World War Two, to support arguments that the present peace movement will lead to the very thing it does not want, that is to say war, a close examination of what role the inter-war peace movement really did play in determining foreign policy, is required.

Chapter One is an examination of the peace movement during the 1920s, plotting its birth during World War One and its growth during the post-war period. Chapter Two is an examination of governmental foreign policy during the 1920s, with the emphasis on the Labour governments of the time, and an analysis of the socialist aspects of Labour's foreign policy. Chapter Three is a description of the growth of the peace movement in the 1930s, during which time public opinion was mobilised behind the many groups which constituted the peace movement. Chapter Four is an examination of foreign policy during the 1930s, with the emphasis on the Conservative dominated governments, and an analysis of the isolationist aspects of Conservative foreign policy, which was in contradiction to the aims of the peace

movement, and to a large extent the Labour Party. The conclusion attempts a vindication of the peace movement during the inter-war years, and will perhaps throw fresh light on the argument being revived today and used against the present peace movement, that war is made inevitable by those who protest most.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude for the encouragement and help I received from my supervisor, David Dewitt throughout the writing of the thesis, and for being available at times when he himself was exceptionally busy. Thanks are also due to my friends and colleagues Don MacLeod and Ann Biscoe; many helpful suggestions arose from the lengthy discussions I inflicted upon them. This thesis could not have been produced without the technical instruction in the finer art of textform, for which I am grateful to Bob Ascah, Ashraf Hasan and Dan Zirker. For being great friends and helping me feel less a stranger in a strange country I thank Al, Gil and Mike.

On the home front I owe thanks to Steve for his patience and understanding. My largest debt of gratitude is owed to my mother, to whom I dedicate the thesis, and without whose constant support and belief this would not have been possible.

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I. INTRODUCTION

When a considerable body of public opinion, the majority of which is well informed and articulate, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament movement in Britain today, is highly critical of the present defence policy of the British government, supporters of the Government stance and indeed Government officials find justification for their actions in appealing to history.[1] They argue that those who think the cause of peace will be advanced by mobilising mass public support on such principles as disarmament are inadvertantly creating conditions in which the outbreak of war is more likely. After all, the argument goes, deterrence is the true guarantor of the preservation of peace, and the existence of a large peace movement in a country is suggestive to a potential aggressor that this country is not, in the final analysis, absolutely determined to defend its interests. This is where the recourse to history is made: it is argued that the pacifism of the inter-war years produced appeasement and thus hastened the onset of World War Two. Such a belief was held sufficiently strong to propel the British government into the Suez debacle of 1956, and, more recently, the Falklands War, perceived as the

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[1] See for instance the article in the Sunday Observer, August 15, 1982 which refers to an article written by Lord George Brown that nuclear protesters could spark off a war, as the Second World War was made inevitable by those who protested most.

Thatcher government's grim determination not to repeat Chamberlain's tragic mistake

That this argument still persists, and is taken as justification for present British foreign policy, necessitates a closer examination of just what exactly was the role of the peace movement in the inter-war years. It must be questioned whether there really was a relationship between the peace movement and the policy of appeasement pursued by the Conservative dominated governments of the 1930s, and how far it is correct to conclude that, given the overwhelming peace mood of the country, there existed no other choices as regards policy. The validity of the argument that pacifism today will lead to war rests on the assumption that it did during the 1920s and 1930s. This study represents an attempt to refute this argument; directly in the case of the pacifist movement during the inter-war period, and perhaps in clarifying the historical myths which have grown up around the subject, to help to lay to rest the supposition that war is made inevitable by those who protest most.

It would perhaps be pertinent at this stage to delineate the boundaries of the term pacifism, which will be used at length. No attempt will be made, for the purposes of this study, to differentiate and classify too rigourously the multifarious types drawn together under this banner. The term will encompass absolute pacifists, who conceived of no discernable difference between justifiable and unjustifiable wars; Christian pacifists, who saw war as being a gross violation of the basic tenets of God's law; socialist pacifists who were prepared to fight in the class war but not national (and to them capitalist inspired) wars, and internationalist pacifists, for whom war was an offense against international law and punishable by international action. That these were only a few of the motivational impulses behind pacifist belief should sensitize the reader to the vastness of the task implicit in an in-depth classification of the term pacifism, and one which is outside the scope of this study.

The argument that the peace movement was to blame for the Conservative government's policy of appeasement and thus ultimately the outbreak of World War Two, was initially propounded by the then Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin as justification for his tardiness on the issue of rearmament. The loss of a safe Conservative seat at the East Fulham by-election in 1933 to a Labour candidate on the charge of 'war-mongering' purportedly made him tarry on the question of rearmament. This 'wave' of pacifism was also cited by his successor Chamberlain, who maintained that his policy of appeasement was merely in keeping with the public mood of pacifism, and that given this mood, there was no alternative policy which the government could follow. This argument raises two main questions which will be dealt with throughout the study; firstly it presupposes that the peace movement had a substantial input into the British political process of the 1920s and 1930s, and secondly it negates the possibility of other alternative policies open to the Government which, if followed through, may have averted war. It also assumes that the peace movement of the 1930s was the same as during the 1920s; however, its metamorphosis will be clearly shown.

(i) The impact of the peace movement on the political process:

Before examining the impact of the peace movement in the political process it is necessary to consider the wider question of the effectiveness of interest groups and public opinion on foreign policy.

Many previous studies have recognised the difficulties implicit in assessing the impact of public opinion and interest groups on foreign policy.[2] The majority conclude that the general public, even in highly literate societies, are disinterested and ill-informed about world affairs.[3] Gabriel Almond made the classic differentiation between the general public and the attentive public, the general public forming the vast majority of people who were unknowledgeable and apathetic with regard to foreign affairs, and the attentive public constituting a small layer of those who were well informed, interested and articulate. James Rosenau extended this stratification in his pyramid analysis: at the base of the pyramid, and thus comprising the bulk of its volume, is the mass public, above which is the attentive public and the apex of the pyramid comprising the opinion making public.[4] Rosenau refers to a study which uses another analogy , of concentric circles to differentiate the layers of society, consisting of the "Great Thinkers", the "Great Disciples", the "Great Disseminators", the "Lesser Disseminators", the "Participating Citizens" and the "Politically Inert".[5]

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[2] This dilemma does not seem to have improved with age -- for example: "Probably no aspect of the study of foreign policy is more difficult to generalise about than the relationship of public opinion to a government's external objectives and diplomatic behaviour."
K.J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (London: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1974), pp. 381-387.
"In the study of politics and the political process there are few subjects more maddeningly elusive than the role played by public opinion in the making of public policy."
Denis Stairs, "Public Opinion and External Affairs: Reflections on the Domestication of Canadian Foreign Policy", *International Journal* 33:1 (Winter 1977-78), 128.
"Few aspects of public affairs lend themselves more readily to impressionistic and faulty analysis than does the relationship between the foreign policy of a nation and the opinion of its citizenry."
James Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 3.

Such detailed stratification may well be useful for the clarification of the cause-effect relationship between what publics advocate and what governments do, however , for the purposes of this study the analysis will be concentrated on the two levels as postulated by Almond, of the general public and the attentive public. Public opinion will be defined as those views held by the mass public, and the attentive public in this case include amongst others the various bodies contained within the peace movement. On the basis of this differentiation a distinction can be made as regards the flow of influence. The mass public can exercise a negative influence on the conduct of foreign policy through the climate of public opinion, and what Almond calls the public mood, by establishing certain parameters within which the policy makers must act.[6] This has a limiting effect on the policy makers' practical freedom of manoeuvre in so far as such influence manifests itself in the policy making process as implicit 'rules of the game'. An illustration in this study is the imposition of conscription two years after World War One broke out. The relatively late arrival of conscription and the clauses providing for conscientious objection owed much to the public mood which dictated that conscription should only be imposed when absolutely necessary and even then with provision for those who, for whatever reason, had objections to combatant service. Limits on policy making of this nature are a function of vague and amorphous varieties of opinion, which have been termed latent but significant.[7] Influence is demonstrated in this case without any clearly defined responsibility and can prove effective "even in the absence of organised vehicles of articulation."[8] Public opinion in this regard is influential in the negative sense of ruling out options as opposed to advocating them.

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[3] See Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1963). Also Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1950).

[4] Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, pp. 33-34.

[5] Elmo Roper, "Who Tells the Story-tellers," *Saturday Review* July 31, 1954, p. 32, as cited in Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, p. 34.

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[6] See Stairs, "Public Opinion and External Affairs," pp. 131-34.

[7] Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973), pp. 16-17.

Positive influence is more ably exercised by organised groups, generally drawn from the attentive public. These are the associational opinion makers that Rosenau talks of, who derive their access to communications from the fact that they speak as representatives of groups of opinion holders.[9] Almond terms such groups the foreign policy interest elites[10], and in this study include amongst others the various groups which formed the body of the peace movement. Positive influence in this regard has been considered in terms of policy setting, whereby public opinion can serve not only just to limit options, but actually determine choices.[11] The main difference between such interest groups and the more general public is that these groups may have an elite access to the policy process, which the general public lack. This is particularly the case with the peace movement during the 1920s, when it had considerable access to the policy process through the Labour Party. The Labour Party supported the policies advocated by the peace movement and thus there existed a coterminous interest as regards policy making. Leaders of the peace groups and of the Labour Party interchanged during this period, evidence of what Bottomore called the circulation of elites.[12] Whilst concrete evidence of the force of such positive influence is difficult to determine it is during this period that it can be found to have manifested itself, if anywhere.

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[8] Stairs, "Public Opinion and External Affairs," p. 133.
[9] Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, p. 61.
[10] Almond, *The American People*, p. 138.
[11] Stairs, "Public Opinion," p. 134.

It is on the basis of such definitions of influence and in consideration of the findings of previous studies on the effect of public opinion and interest groups on foreign policy that the extent to which the peace movement did have any input into the political process of the 1920s and 1930s must be determined. The period in question is in itself of particular relevance since some studies purport that the end of World War One marked the demise of foreign policy as solely the premise of governments and diplomats, and date the incursion of public opinion into foreign policy from this time.[13] That public opinion was unusually informed about foreign affairs during this period will be illustrated later, but whether this interest had any effect on government policy is another matter. During the 1920s there did exist a considerably well organised peace movement in the form of Christian, political and humanist groups, but public opinion remained uninterested, perhaps due to the "invincible ignorance of the public" as one writer observed from his experiences in the Information Department of the

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[12] T.B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 48-68.

[13] Joseph Frankel *The Making of Forein Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 71-72.

British Foreign Office.[14] In the 1930s however, due to changing international circumstances which brought the prospects of another war to the forefront of the public mind, public opinion did assert itself strongly in favour of the policies advocated by the peace movement. Thus there was a relatively cohesive mass of opinion constituted of the mobilised general public and the attentive public.

This study will attempt to assess the impact of the peace movement, both on its own and in concert with public opinion, on British foreign policy during the inter-war years. Whilst it is recognised that there is a relationship between the higher civil servants and the decision makers in the Cabinet, and that there is no distinction so fine as that of the Cabinet members deciding policy which the civil servants merely implement, for the purposes of this study the decision makers themselves have been concentrated upon, and the relationship between these elected officials and interest groups -- in this case the peace movement.[15]

Chapter One is a consideration of the birth of the peace movement and its activity in the 1920s. Chapter Two is an examination of governmental policy during the 1920s and the input from the peace movement. It will be seen that the pacifist impulse which had grown from revulsion against the Great War coincided with the election in 1924 of the first Labour government. There was a commonality of interest between the peace movement and the Labour government in as far as the Government pursued policies advocated by, and in keeping with, the tenets and beliefs of the peace movement, that is to say the conciliation of Germany and the creation of an international system based on peace. This could suggest that the peace movement had a significant effect on the policy of the Labour government. However it is here argued that the coterminous policies were attributable to the basic ideology of the Labour Party with regard to foreign policy, in the emphasis it placed on internationalism. On these grounds it is difficult to assess the real importance of the peace movement since they were advocating actions which the Labour government would have pursued in any case, as an integral part of its ideology.

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[14] Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle* (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1959), p. 199.

[15] Although this approach could engender blind spots in the study (for instance, more detail would be beneficial at pp. 94-108 but is obviously beyond the scope of the study), it could well be the most relevant, since foreign policy making during this period was most definitely the prerogative of the holder of the office of Foreign Secretary. As such, the foreign policy of the day bore the imprint of the foreign secretary, almost to the exclusion of the civil service. See A.L. Rowse, *All Souls and Appeasement* (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 85.

Chapter Three examines the evidence of pacifist public opinion outside of the established peace groups, and Chapter Four considers the activities of the Conservative dominated governments during the same period. The 1930s have been considered the hey-day of British pacifism, and in so far as mobilisation of support and becoming an effective organisation this could be a valid belief. However, as regards success in terms of impact into the political process, then a different picture emerges. In terms of policy, the Conservative governments followed paths contradictory to those advocated by the peace movement, i.e. appeasement at the expense of the system of collective security which had been initiated by the Labour government and supported by the peace movement. The explanation for Conservative policy also lies in the realm of ideology -- the Conservative tradition with all its implications was continued in the policy of appeasement, enshrining no continental commitments.

Such findings suggest that the peace movement had little effect on foreign policy; the fact that the Conservative governments of the 1930s took little notice of it despite the overwhelming evidence of the pacifist mood raises the question as to whether it can be judged as being successful in the context of influence during the 1920s, or whether this can be attributed to the internationalist tenets of the Labour Party.

(ii)What were the choices open to the government?

The study will also address the contention that appeasement was the only policy acceptable to the electorate, by an explanation and consideration of the policies advocated by the peace movement, and also the Labour Party. Throughout Chapters Two, Three and Four it will be seen that the Labour governments, in keeping with the philosophy of the peace movement, worked towards the establishment of a collective security system based on the League of Nations, which would ultimately banish war from the international system. Disputes would be settled by international arbitration under the Permanent Court of International Justice and transgressors of international law would be faced with the combined strength and disapprobation of the community of nations. Whilst it has to be admitted that this was somewhat of an idealistic conception, it was a realistic reaction to the international situation during the calm decade of the 1920s. E.H. Carr characterised the 1920s in terms of the "intellectualism of international politics".[14] Utopian rationalism was re-born in the years following World War One, and the belief in such structures as the League and the Permanent Court was proof of this. A system of collective security demanded the confrontation of an aggressor with collective coercion, and as subsequent evidence has shown, had this system been mobilised against Hitler, then the international system might not have deteriorated to the extent that it did during the late 1930s. The Conservative governments merely paid lip service to the League and its principles of collective security, but pursued as an alternative a policy of appeasement, which really was not an effective and planned out policy, rather a reaction to individual events as they arose -- a manifestation of the fundamental Conservative perception of the worth of non-intervention.

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[14] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 27.

An attempt will be made to assess the impact of the peace movement on public opinion and governmental policy in the concluding chapter, along with a refutation of some of the classical arguments directed against the peace movement on the basis of these findings.

II. THE PEACE MOVEMENT DURING THE 1920s

A. The Great War

The outbreak of the First World War focused and crystallised the rather vague and idealised notions of pacifism and war resistance which had been current in Britain during the nineteenth century[1] and channelled them into one of two organisations established for such a purpose, depending on whether the motivation behind the pacifist belief was religious or political. Stretching back to the Reformation, the only refuge for those who had objections to war had been the historic peace churches, beginning with the Anabaptists and the Mennonites, and continuing with the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Plymouth Brethren and the Christadelphinians. The War prompted the foundation of two highly organised and efficient Fellowships, which were responsible to a great extent for publicising the conception of pacifism and gaining sympathy for their supporters. These organisations were the No-Conscription Fellowship (N-CF) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR).

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[1] For instance the idea of the Just War, as developed in medieval political thought, and carried down through the centuries; Bentham's philosophy of the community of interest between nations, coining the word 'international'; Cobden's idea that there is no rational motive for war.

The No-Conscription Fellowship

The N-CF was founded in November 1914 by Fenner Brockway, the editor of the Labour Leader, the journal of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), on the suggestion of his wife to find out the number of men who were not prepared to undertake combatant service.[18] The ethos of the N-CF sprang essentially from the socialist inspiration of its supporters; it was a body campaigning against the imposition of conscription, and as such had specifically political aims. The National Committee was composed of socialist activists, for example, Clifford Allen, and the bulk of its support tended to come from young ILP socialists who objected to the negation of personal liberty which the introduction of conscription represented:

> This country is faced with the most insidious danger that can confront a free people in the claim of the state to dispose of a man's life against his will, and what is worse, against his moral convictions, and of his service without consent.[19]

The primary object of the movement was to challenge the right of government to impose conscription, even in the event of war; as such it was concerned with the defence of libertarian principles rather than any blatantly religious motives. Both Brockway and his wife were supporters of the Keir Hardie faction within the ILP, and Keir Hardie had vocalised his discontent at the prospect of conscription even before the War began:

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[18] Fenner Brockway, *Inside The Left*(London: New Leader, Ltd., 1947), pp. 66-67.

[19] Clifford Allen, as quoted in Joyce Berkman, "Pacifism in England 1914-1915"(unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1967), p. 42.

> All forms of militarism belong to the past. It comes down to us as a relic of the days when kings and nobles ruled as well as reigned, and when workers were voteless, voiceless serfs. Militarism and democracy cannot be blended ... compulsory military service is the negation of democracy. It compels the youth of the country, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, to learn the art of war. That is despotism, not democracy. No liberty loving people will tolerate having these forms of servitude forced upon them. Conscription is the badge of the slave.[20]

The results of research by historian Denis Hayes would seem to indicate that the fears of Hardie, the ILP and also the trades unions were indeed founded in fact. In his study Hayes suggested that there was a connection between the drive for compulsory military training on the part of some Conservatives and their reaction against the tide of popular politics and trade union power which had arisen since the suffrage expansion and attendant social reform.[21] The National Service League, formed in 1902, was a conscriptionist pressure group composed of staunch conservatives who believed compulsory military training could serve a social as well as military function. It is interesting to note the blossoming of youth groups around the start of the century, such as the Boy Scouts, Church Lads and the Boys Brigade, which, it has been suggested, "represented an attempt by political, military and religious elites to manipulate and socialise potentially rebellious youths."[22]

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[20] As quoted in D.Boulton, *Objection Overuled* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967), p. 99.

[21] Denis Hayes, *Conscription Conflict* (New York: Garland Publishing House, 1973), p. 9.

The foundation of the N-CF represented a divergence of Christianity's near-monopoly of pacifism, and was to prove a more effective campaigning body than its Christian counterpart, the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation

The FoR was formed at a conference of 130 pacifist Christians at Trinity College, Cambridge, during the Christmas period in 1914. Although largely Non-conformist and Quaker, it became an umbrella organisation under which the fragmented peace groups within each of the major religious denominations came together. Its basis was explicitly religious, revolving around the contradiction between the basic tenets of God's law and the way of war.[23] Since their argument was more a moral assertion than one of political reasoning, the FoR tended to be a much more muted movement than the N-CF; those disagreeing with the militant stance of the N-CF would join the FoR (and this included a fair number of socialists e.g. George Lansbury, a future leader of the Labour Party), which stood for spiritual reassurance rather than the mobilisation of its members, taking the view that the individual conscience should dictate to man, and not mass propaganda. The organisation was described by a Quaker as one "which works by prayer and the propogation of a right spirit, which eschews political action and is not in any hurry to count up results."[24]

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[22] *Ibid*., p. 10.

The work of the No-Conscription Fellowship and the Fellowship of Reconciliation

Whilst the N-CF and the FoR began their campaigns in 1914, the pacifist stance remained relatively unknown until the Military Service Act of January 1916 brought their adherents into confrontation with the state. It was not until conscientious objectors to war began to vocalise their views as a direct result of the tribunals system provided under the Act that sufficient interest in the public mind was generated and the strong basis of a pacifist movement founded.

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[23] Look! Christ in khaki, out in France, thrusting his bayonet into the body of a German Worker. See! The Son of God with a machine gun, ambushing a column of German infantry, catching them unawares in a lane and mowing them down in their helplessness. Hark! The Man of Sorrows in a cavalry charge, cutting, hacking, thrusting, crushing, cheering. No! No! That picture is an impossible one, and we all know it. That settles the matter for me. I cannot uphold the war." Clifford Allen in the preface to J.W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience* (London: Allen & Urwin, 1922), p. 22.

[24] Quoted in Boulton, *Objection Overuled*, p. 52.

The Act, which instituted conscription for all unmarried men and widows without children and dependents, aged eighteen to forty-one, did in fact contain a conscience clause. This was largely a result of the long tradition of voluntary military forces which Britain had enjoyed, which was in itself a result of the geographical fact that Britain was an island, and the English channel existed as an effective natural barrier to territorial invasion. There was also the belief that freedom from conscription was almost a natural right of the British people, which had grown as a consequence of the relative ease with which an empire was created and maintained by a volunteer army and navy, when continental powers had perceived the necessity of imposing conscription. Herbert Asquith, Prime Minister of the coalition government in 1916, faced with the necessity of imposing conscription, obviously saw it to be prudent to include a conscience clause, mindful of the libertarian principles of the Liberal members of the Cabinet. However, even the Conservative faction accepted the case for the inclusion of such, but not one so vague as that which was included in the Act. They were willing to accept objections to service on religious grounds only, and even then just to members of the historic peace churches like the Quakers and the Christadelphinians, and they certainly did not expect the clause to allow for total and unconditional exemption; they could only contemplate exemption from military/combatant service.

The N-CF did much to aid the conscientious objectors passing through the tribunal system. Every known conscientious objector had his own record card; daily lists of courts martial were compiled; a daily bulletin was issued giving information on the number of men arrested and where they were taken. This service was invaluable to the families and friends of the conscientious objectors, since it represented their only source of information. A network of prison visitors and camp and guardroom contacts was made, and an N-CF representative attended most courts-martial. It published its own newspaper, The Tribunal, and this, combined with a press department which supplied other newspapers with information on the work of the Fellowship and the treatment of its members in prison or in the army, increased public awareness of the conscientious objectors With its close links to the Labour Party (through its most prominent M.P. member, Philip Snowden), the N-CF could keep parliament informed as to the treatment of prisoners and express its views on the proposals put forward by the government for dealing with conscientious objectors. That the N-CF was effective as a pressure group cannot be doubted; the government could not ignore it, and the "fiery advocacy and racy panache"[25] of The Tribunal drew the attention of the government to the point of prosecuting members of the editorial staff under the Defence of the Realm Act for publishing literature liable to undermine the war effort.

The work of the FoR was not as political as that of the N-CF. Much of the Fellowship's work concerned informing public opinion. They joined with the N-CF and the Quakers Friends Committee to form a Joint Advisory Council to deal with the basic problems connected with conscription. But on the whole theirs was a morally supportive role.

The Garsington Community

Garsington was the home of Philip Morrell, a pacifist Liberal M.P. and his wife, Lady Ottoline Morrell, patroness of the arts and "a very remarkable woman."[26] They provided a haven, and a very congenial one, for literary and artistic figures who objected to war and had pacifist leanings. Garsington was a manor house set in spacious grounds in the countryside which provided a calm and isolated retreat for such figures as Siegfried Sassoon, D.H. Lawrence, John Middleton Murray and his wife Katherine Mansfield, Henry

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[25] J. Rae, *Conscience and Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 202.

[26] Robert Gathorne-Hardy, ed., *Ottoline at Garsington. Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell 1915-1918* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 25.

James and the whole of the Bloomsbury group (Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Duncan Grant, Lytton Strachey) at frequent intervals.[27]

It was here that Robert Graves, whilst convalescing in England from injuries received at the front, "heard that there was another side to the question of war guilt."[28] Conscientious objectors were permitted to work on the manor farm as an alternative to serving in the army.[29] Largely as a result of his time spent at Garsington, and in the company of pacifist artists, Siegfried Sassoon decided to make a dramatic protest against the war. After consultation with Bertrand Russell and John Middleton-Murray[30] he handed a statement, rejecting war, to his commanding officer.The turmoil he experienced in doing this is clearly described in his semi-autobiographical Memoirs of an Infantry Officer.[31]

Garsington was unique in that it attracted both political and non-political pacifists and as such it represented a secular combination of the forces of both the N-CF and the FoR. The non-political pacifists, such as the Bloomsbury group, D.H. Lawrence and Siegfried Sassoon, favoured personal modes of protest as opposed to organised participation in the cause, whereas the more politically motivated pacifists such as Bertrand Russell and Arnold Ponsonby, were not only active within the Garsington community but were also leading lights of organised peace groups such as the N-CF, and as will be described later, the Union of Democratic Control (UDC). The Garsington pacifists shared an intellectual humanist inspiration for their pacifism, compared with the religious and socialist basis for the belief of the members of the N-CF and the FoR.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Robert Graves, *Goodbye To All That* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), p. 307.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Gathorne-Hardy, *Ottoline at Garsington*, p.p. 181-182; see also Siegfried Sassoon, *Siegfrieds Journey* (London: Faber & Faber, 1921), p. 52.

[31] Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (London: Faber & Faber, 1930), pp. 308-334.

B. The Legacy of the War and the 1920s

The nature of the war itself did much to aid the cause of pacifism. It was a generally held opinion at the outbreak of war that Britain need only get involved by utilising her navy, still the strongest in Europe, and also by acting as Europe's banker through her pre-eminent financial position. Thus an appeal was made for 100,000 men, and the initial response to this call for volunteers was overwhelming -- over two million men volunteered in the first nine months.[32] This inclined the government and military officials toward a far greater participation in the land war than had been at first anticipated, and the response began to trail off as the real nature of the war was revealed, both to the government and the public. The convictions of the military officials that the war would be short and easily won proved to be a grave mistake. The patriotic exuberence of the first year of the war gave way to horror at the loss of life, and to what end? Trench warfare had quickly produced a stalemate, and the war seemed to be making no progress. The war was proving neither short nor glorious, and thus soldiers at the front experiencing the decidedly unromantic reality of modern warfare, and their friends and relatives at home ever more despairing as to the purpose of the war , needed no encouragement to cultivate pacifist sentiments. "War was not glamour or glory but abysmal grief and purposeful waste."[33]

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[32] Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 4.

Not only was revulsion against the horrors of the Great War in itself a reason behind the blossoming of pacifist support it also had the effect of swaying the public mind with regard to future wars: "Peace was the only policy the British people seemed willing to endorse. Fear of war dominated and oppressed the public mind."[34] There was a spirit of determination that such a thing should never happen again. This had manifested itself as early as August 1914 in the form of radical and internationalist organisations such as the Union of Democratic Control, and in September 1915 of the Womens International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Founded by Ramsey MacDonald,

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[33] Vera Brittain, *Testament of Experience* (London: Gollancz Ltd., 1957), p. 80.

[34] Martin Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1966), p. 93.

Norman Angell and Garsington pacifists Arnold Ponsonby and E.D. Morrell, the UDC was organised to remedy what its founders perceived as the situation which led up to the Great War i.e. that foreign affairs in all countries were in the control of professional diplomats. It was held that "the people" did not want war but were led into it by the vested interests of arms manufacturers and diplomats. Thus the UDC wanted to help secure public assent, if not control, over British foreign policy, which would in turn enhance international understanding.

The WILPF was the British section of the Womens International League (WIL), and had at its core suffragists, but attracted women from all walks of life anxious to work for peace. It had five objectives written into its constitution:

1. to work for that peace between nations, races, and classes which is based on justice and goodwill
2. to work for the acceptance of the belief that war is a crime
3. to substitute Conference and Law for Coercive Force;
4. to secure full rights of citizenship to women
5. to cooperate with women in other countries who are working for the same ends.[33]

During the 1920s they were very active, sending deputations to the Foreign Office; taking part in No-More-War demonstrations countrywide; attending international conferences and initiating the same, taking themes such as "The Responsibility of the Women of the British Empire to work for World Peace."[36] Their primary purpose was to educate, particularly women, and to this end they held petitions and organised meetings to "educate and arouse British women and men" as to the possibilities of peaceful resolution of disputes:

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[33] British Library of Political and Economic Science, WILPF papers, Annual Reports, 1915-1928.

> Our problem was to find some simple means of securing that support of public opinion which is necessary if the Government is to be influenced in the direction of accepting the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes[37]

For this purpose they organised a "Peacemakers Pilgrimage" in 1926, ending with a demonstration in Hyde Park on 19 June, and a deputation to the Foreign Secretary on 6 July. Support for the WILPF came from Time and Tide, edited by Lady Rhondda and Winifred Holtby, the contributors including some important women pacifists such as Vera Brittain and Ellen Wilkinson (who was later to become a pacifist MP).[38]

A recognition of the need for some form of league of nations became widely realised. A League of Nations society had been founded in 1915, and a separate organisation, the League of Free Nations Association had been established in 1917. These two fused in 1918 to form the League of Nations Union, which aimed to support wholeheartedly the League of

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Brittain, *Testament of Experience*, pp. 42-44.

Nations by nurturing the growth of its influence and prestige and gaining the support of British public opinion and thus the British government. Its membership far surpassed that of all other existing peace groups and as a supra-party and non-religious body gained far more supporters than did the religious groups (such as the Society of Friends, the FoR) or the socialist groups (e.g. the No More War Movement, as the successor to the N-CF was known). It developed a network of branches all over Britain and by 1929 there existed 2,760 branches and 650 junior branches.[39] Lord Robert Cecil was its first chairman, (who, incidentally, had done much to shape the Covenant as a British delegate at the Paris Peace Conference), from 1919 to 1923, and on his resignation, having accepted the post of Lord Privy Seal in the first Baldwin cabinet, he regarded "the steady advance of the Government towards a sounder view, as we think, of the League's policy has been due entirely to the growth of the Union and the effectiveness with which its force in the country has been brought before Ministers and Members of Parliament."[40]

It cannot be doubted that the LNU amply fulfilled its self-proclaimed role as the educator of the public in terms of foreign policy and the importance of the League for future peaceful international relations; indeed it was largely responsible for the wave of internationalism which characterised the peace movement during the 1920s. The LNU became the apostles of collective security in the public mind.[41] Collective security in the form of the League, and the faith in its ability to use its moral authority to ensure peace, were the basis of the internationalism which manifested itself during the balmy international scene of the 1920s. This was particularly apparent after the initiation of the Geneva Protocol in 1924, and the Locarno Treaties of 1925. E.H. Carr, writing in 1936, had this view of public opinion and also internationalism in connection with the League:

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[39] Ernest Bramsted, "Apostles of Collective Security. The LNU and its Functions", *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 13: (3) (1967), 35.
[40] Quoted in Bramsted, Ibid., pp. 347-364.

> For the intellectual, the League means the text of the Covenant with its complicated machinery for the enforcement of peace. For the layman, the League is different. Their faith is religious rather than political -- it clings to the spirit of the thing and is reinforced by the ancient and instinctive British prejudice against written constitutions.[42]

The LNU seemed to be motivating public opinion as it had never been motivated before, and the man to a large extent responsible for this was Lord Cecil. He endeavoured to inform and educate the public on the one hand (through the many meetings of the various branches of the LNU, and also through the official LNU publication, Headway) of the necessity of supporting the League and collective security, while at the same time pressing for disarmament, and also to impress upon the government the imperative necessity of pursuing a pro-League foreign policy. The following is a telling comment from Cecil addressed to Stanley Baldwin, bemoaning the inability of the War Office and the Admiralty to take the question of disarmament seriously:

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[41] Ibid.

[42] E.H. Carr, "Public Opinion as a Safeguard of Peace in International Affairs", Royal Institute of International Affairs, 15 (1936), 55.

> I am really disturbed, because I am quite convinced that public opinion demands that something should be done in this matter. The fighting services must recognise that in the end they must be governed like all of the rest of us by public opinion, and must move with it or find themselves sooner or later overwhelmed by it.[43]

Collective security and disarmament were not perceived as incompatible aims. Since the League existed to solve disputes by arbitration, then the need to increase existing armaments was seen to be nonsensical. Gradual multilateral disarmament was seen to be a natural progression, with the League dealing with crises by moral authority and recourse to international law, rather than confronting aggression with aggression. Article XVI of the League Covenant did sanction the use of military force under the auspices of the League but this would take the form of a multi-national force.

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[43] British Library, Lord Cecil of Chelwood Papers, 51080, December 5, 1925.

In the late 1920s the Churches became aware of the importance of their role to support openly peace and condemn modern warfare. The motivation behind this move seems to have been the need to rectify the unseemly reputation acquired as a result of its initial enthusiasm for the Great War. This image had to be expunged if the Anglican Church was to become as active within the peace movement as were the Non-conformists. Thus a "Christ and Peace" campaign was initiated in October 1929, which was to last a little over a year, and included such actions as a National Day of Prayer on the Sunday preceding the Conference on Naval Armaments in London on 21 January 1930. The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to Ramsey Macdonald asking his sanction for such:

> I wonder whether you, as Prime Minister, knowing as no-one else does what depends upon this Conference, could either write me a short letter or authorise me to say that you would very greatly welcome this association of the Christian people of Great Britain.[44]

Although not altogether satisfactory, due mainly to a lack of leadership and organisation, the campaign did represent the first time Church of England clergy had taken a step to be as active as their colleagues on the question of pacifism.

Not only did pacifist sentiment emerge within the context of organised groups, but also in the form of individual protest. The most important and significant of these was the campaign launched by Lord Arthur Ponsonby in 1925. As a founder of the UDC, fervent supporter of the League and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the first Labour cabinet, he was responsible for propelling pacifism to the forefront of public consciousness. In October 1925 he formed a campaign to collect signatures on a petition which read:

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[44] Public Record Office, Ramsey MacDonald Papers, PRO 30/69, 672 (pt. 3), fs.174-177, December 3, 1929.

> We, the undersigned, convinced that all disputes between nations are capable of settlement either by diplomatic negotiation or by some form of International Arbitration, hereby solemnly declare that we shall refuse to support or render war service to any government which resorts to arms.[45]

By December 1927 he was able to present to Prime Minister Baldwin 128,770 signatures, an impressive forerunner of a letter sent to the press by Dick Sheppard in 1934 which prompted 136,000 signatures.[46]

Ponsonby followed this Peace Letter Campaign by the publication of a statement of his views contained in Now is the Time: An Appeal for Peace (1925). He was against war not on religious grounds but because of "its failure to achieve a single desirable object, whatever the gigantic cost may be."[47] It was a utilitarian consideration that the benefits of war could never outweigh the destruction and misery it would cost, and he railed against the Authority who encouraged a romantic image of warfare, and the nationalist bias of history books, the glorification of the soldier/nation/empire by the press, government, churches and schools, along with the compulsory Officer Training Corps.[48] Ponsonby's aim was to alert the peacetime public mind to pacifism and thus be able to confront a government with a substantial body of opinion which would brook no war. He had elucidated the point in a Cambridge Union debate on March 8, 1927, which passed the motion "that lasting peace can only be secured by the people of England adopting an uncompromising attitude of pacifism." It is interesting to note that this debate caused no murmurs in the press, as compared to a later Oxford Union debate.[49]

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[45] Imperial War Museum, Miscellaneous Papers, 380, Item 21.
[46] Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 80.
[47] Quoted in Ceadel, Ibid., p. 81.

The revulsion against the War was shared by governmental figures. Despite Lloyd George's lofty sentiments expressed halfway through his term as Prime Minister, his earlier outbursts of his intention to squeeze Germany until the pips squeaked, and the consternation over the Greek/Turkish fighting in what became known as the Chanak Crisis, forced his resignation.[50]

> I mean to go wherever the policy of European pacification leads me. There is nothing else worth fighting for at the present moment. Office is certainly not worth a struggle apart from what you

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[48] See Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 96.
[49] The Listener, February 23, 1978.
[50] Jack Watson, *Twentieth Century World Affairs*, (London: John Murray, 1977), p. 23.

> can accomplish through it. It is the policy that matters and not the premiership.[51]

The press reflected the mood of the country: Lord Beaverbrook, owner of the Daily Express decided to become "an agitator for peace. The people by this time were against war. Some Ministers might still wish to go to war. They could unfurl the banners and beat the drums. But the nation would not march."[52] Those politicians who were thought to favour war as a method of resolving disputes as opposed to negotiations were derided. A prime example of this is the fact that Winston Churchill, after twenty-two years as an M.P., was defeated in the 1922 election. Churchill appeared in H.G. Wells' acidic book, Men like Gods as Rupert Catskill, Secretary of State for War, whose "violent imaginations have caused the deaths of thousands of people"[53] In his election address, the ILP candidate, Fenner Brockway, encouraged by Clifford Allen, described Churchill as "a public danger and a menace to the peace of the world."[54]

The 1919 Manifesto of the Peace Society included the following lines :

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[51] Quoted in Gilbert, *Roots of Appeasement*, p. 83.

[52] Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George* (London: Collins, 1963), p. 169. See also Gilbert, *Roots of Appeasement*, p. 144 who relates how Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of The Times, in an effort to display to the Germans his keeness for reconciliation, edited the paper to contain only 'favourable' articles on Germany.

[53] H.G. Wells, *Men like Gods* (London: Cassell and Company, 1923), p. 116.

[54] Martin Gilbert, *Plough My Own Furrow. The Story of Lord Allen of Hurtwood* (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 176.

> The avoidance of war became the first preoccupation of every member of Parliament whose seat depended on the man in the streets vote. The election addresses of Members of Parliament may have been written for them by the intellectuals. But speeches and votes in the House, whenever military sanctions are the issue, are dictated by the opinions of the man in the street.[55]

If the nascant pacifism of a large portion of the British public was merely awaiting impetus to materialise in more positive form, then the near saturation of the literary field with fictional and non-fictional accounts of the war and the revival of interest in the works of the war poets which occurred at the end of the 1920s was an important factor. The list of such works is quite substantial, but the most popular included Siegfried Sassoon's Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man, (1928) and Memoirs of an Infantry Officer (1930), R.C. Sherriff's book and play Journeys End (1929, 1930), R. Aldington's Death of a Hero (1929), Robert Graves Goodbye To All That (1930). Books from other countries reinforced the effect of the British ones, for instance, The Enormous Room (1928) by E.E. Cummings, All Quiet on the Western Front (1929) by Erich Marie Remarque and A Farewell To Arms (1929) by Ernest Hemingway. The popularity of such books prompted the republication of the works of the war poets, such as Sassoon, Owen and Brooke. The significance of this literary trend in helping to nurture the spirit of anti-militarism lay in its very nature: the glorification of war evident in epic battle literature had no place in the work of the war poets. Their aim was to communicate the reality of modern warfare, with its weapons not only responsible for death but mutilation and dismemberment, to the civilians at home.[56] Not only had it been their self-imposed mission to strip warfare of its romance, in many cases it was a catharsis for themselves, mentally necessary to come to terms with the horror of it all. This obsessive mental state is evidenced in Sassoon's poem, "Repression of War Experience":

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[55] Carr, "Public Opinion", p. 856.

> You're quiet and peaceful, simmering safe at home;
> You'd never think there was a bloody war on...
> O yes you would ... why, you can hear the guns.
> Hark! Thud, thud, thud, -- quite soft ... they never cease -
> Those whispering guns -- O Christ, I want to go out
> And screech at them to stop -- I'm going crazy;
> I'm going stark, staring mad because of those guns.[57]

Robert Graves describes in his autobiography a similar experience he had with Edmund Blunden: "Edmund had war shock as badly as myself, and we would talk each other into an almost hysterical state about the trenches. We agreed that we would not be right until we got all that talk on to paper."[58]

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[56] See for instance the horrors of poison gas described in Wilfred Owen's "Dulce est Decorum Est".

[57] Sassoon in John H. Johnstone, *English Poetry of the First World War* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 97.

[58] Graves, *Goodbye To All That*, pp. 358-359.

The popularity of such works can be explained partly by the gradual dulling of any feelings of animosity which were present at the close of the war. The Weimar Government was seen to be guiding Germany along a stable and peaceful path, and a conciliatory attitude to these former enemies was being followed by British governments during the 1920s. The War could be examined on a reasonably rational basis at last, and the disinterest and disinclination of the public towards the literature of the war faded. Reading such literature provoked a general disillusionment with the War, and perhaps anger directed at the forces responsible for leading Britain into it. The cause of pacifism was to be greatly aided by this burgeoning anti-militarism.[59]

Conclusion on the effect of pacifism in the 1920s

In the decade after the War, pacifism had not advanced too far in British public life beyond the ground it had laid during the War. As a movement it had not achieved much; the average opinion of the typical pacifist whose views drove him into a pacifist organisation could be summed up in this transposed remark by George Orwell: "to ... an ordinary man, a crank meant a pacifist and a pacifist meant a crank."[60] The N-CF had lost much of its impetus at the end of the War, when conscription was no longer so important an issue as re-adjusting to a post-war world, and the change of its name to the No More War Movement connoting a politically biased organisation which saw pacifism as an extension of a socialist faith. In the Churches, despite the 1929 campaign, the Society of Friends remained the only religious body considered respectable; in the Protestant and Catholic circles, pacifism had little prominent support. It was only to gain charismatic leadership and socially influential support in the 1930s. The Garsington and Bloomsbury advocates of pacifism remained as they had begun, a separate, elitist group.

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[59] See Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 114.

[60] George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (New York, 1958), p. 206. In the original it reads socialist and not pacifist.

However, as a concept and belief, vague though it must have been to the man in the street, pacifism did filter through British society. Mobilised by a personal sense of the horrors of the War, since a majority of people had experienced the grief of a lost relative or friend, and with external input from the stance of the Labour Party, pacifism manifested itself in the internationalism of widespread support of the League and of the disarmament campaign begun in the latter half of the decade. The public had an almost religious belief in the moral authority of the League as a means of preserving peace, and the LNU did its utmost to educate the public as to the importance of the League in future international relations.

But the groundwork had been done; as regards parliamentary support the No More War Movement was to claim thirty supporters among the ranks of Labour M.P.s after the 1929 election;[61] and the combined effects of the Depression and the 1931 domestic political crisis served as a catalyst to the growing peace movement. In the 1930s it could call on the services of those who had been preparing for such a time during the 1920s, and had been radicalised over domestic and international events.

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[61] Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 85.

III. GOVERNMENT IN THE 1920s: THE LABOUR EFFORT

The 1920s can be considered the decade in which the high hopes of the Labour Party as regards international peace seemed possible; in spite of the fact they were only in office for two years of the ten, with Conservatives in power for eight, they achieved a great deal as regards pacification and laid the ground for a stable peace system. It was a circumstantial misfortune that this system was never supported or continued in its implementation by the Conservatives.

A. The Election of the first Labour Government

During the general election of 1923, Labour had run on a platform of international cooperation through the League of Nations, and the settlement of disputes by conciliation and arbitration.[62] Only such a policy, it was believed, would pave the way for disarmament and any chance for future lasting peace. The response of the electorate to Labour's appeal showed that the British people, not just the parliamentary Labour Party and its supporters, were more than willing to endorse a policy of conciliation, arbitration and disarmament. It was no longer solely the faith of the socialist, or member of the UDC that world opinion should and could regulate the international community. Already the ambivalence of Baldwin's policy towards the League and disarmament had proved unsatisfactory to the electorate, and was to prove so again at a later stage to a larger body of followers of international affairs.[63]

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[62] For a detailed account of Labour's foreign policy see Elaine Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy* (California: Stanford University, 1952).

Pacifists held key posts within the Labour Party: the former leaders of the N-CF, Clifford Allen and Fenner Brockway, became respectively chairman and secretary of the ILP, and the former leaders of the ILP, Ramsey Macdonald, Philip Snowden and Arthur Henderson became the heads of the Labour government when it was elected into office in January 1924. Thus led by pacifists who had been severe critics of the War, and supported by the overwhelmingly pacifist body of the ILP, the Labour government had a mandate to attempt to reform the conduct of international affairs, much as the UDC had earlier advocated, and to nurture the instruments of peace -- that is to say the League. However the pursuit of such objectives was contingent upon the approval of the Liberal M.P.s on whom Labour were dependent for support, owing to the fact the Labour government was a minority one. Labour were aware that this would have more import for their domestic affairs than their international; the Liberals would not be so keen to support the application of socialist reforms, but where international affairs were concerned Labour realised it could have an ally in implementing its foreign policy. The Liberals had tended towards agreement with the Labour Party against the post-war foreign policy pursued by the Conservatives, and Labour saw no reason why this trend could not continue while they were in power.

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[63] That is to say at the 1929 election, and mainly due to the work of the LNU.

Ramsey Macdonald made an admirable beginning in initiating and effecting the majority of the international policies to which the party was pledged. He attempted the genuine and wholehearted conciliation of Germany whilst at the same time allaying French anxieties. Hence the acceptance at the London Conference in July 1924 of the Dawes Plan to ease the reparations problem. After this conference, and in the light of the constant French search for security, MacDonald hoped that a more general solution to the problem of collective security could be put before the foreign ministers at the Assembly of the League. This would necessarily entail a strengthening of the security provisions of the League, since the Covenant conceded the right to engage in war to nations failing to settle their disputes by pacific means (Article XV). The Council of the League would have to become more powerful in order to identify the aggressor in conflict situations and act thereupon to impose economic, and if necessary, military sanctions. Labour believed that the threat of sanctions would prove such a deterrent against potential aggressors that states would be less likely to overstep the moral boundaries imposed by the League; thus arbitration, and not force would become accepted as the only method of resolving international disputes. This would destroy the balance of power system, seen as the major cause of World War One, and create security for all nations. Elements of such proposals were contained in the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assurance presented to the League's Temporary Mixed Commission, composed of individual delegates rather than official government delegations. Lord Cecil had been one such delegate, but his ideas had been modified due to Conservative pressure, and due to such the treaty laid much emphasis on military security pacts with disarmament a minor part of the overall plan. MacDonald made an alternative proposal, in conjunction with the French Prime Minister, Herriot, which led to MacDonald's personal appearance at the Fifth Assembly of the League (an indication of the Labour government's enthusiasm) and the introduction of a resolution which led to the adoption in early October of the Geneva Protocol, clearly defining the aggressor in future conflicts as a state which refused to submit to pacific settlement, and making provision for collective coercive measures against them. The Protocol laid down a system of arbitration whereby all disputes would be settled by pacific means. The coercion clauses were largely seen by Labour as a sop to "unreal" French anxieties, and it was not expected that a situation could arise which would demand the extremes of military force. Rather the aggressor would think twice before committing an act which would incur the moral condemnation of the League, or if he continued, back down under the force of the combined material resistance of the community of nations.

The Protocol had as its natural successor disarmament, since by its own terms no state would be in need of more armaments than those sufficient to maintain the international policing force. Since this was so integral to the scheme of things, it was provided that a disarmament conference would be convened in 1925 on the condition that the Protocol had been ratified by at least a majority of the permanent members of the Council and ten other members of the League Assembly. Once this plan had been adopted by the international conference, the Protocol would come into force.

However, the Labour government was voted out of office before they could ratify the Protocol (in November 1924), and it was never ratified under the Conservative leadership of Baldwin and Austen Chamberlain, who disapproved of world wide commitments and did not trust overmuch in compulsory arbitration as a means of preserving peace. This appeared to be the first of a series of misperceptions on the part of the Conservatives, since the Protocol did not enlarge the commitments of the signatories except with regard to the submission of disputes to pacific settlement. It created no obligations as regards the use of armed force which were not already enshrined in the Covenant, and commitments to the use of force were actually restricted, and not enlarged, with less probability of the use thereof. Yet the Conservatives chose to reject the Protocol.

The general election effectively dashed the hopes of Labour to complete the foreign policy programme it had initiated. But it was important that they had achieved a great deal; a spirit of compromise and cooperation had been introduced onto the scene of international affairs, and a policy of conciliation with Germany had been embarked upon with the approval, albeit cautious, of France. Steps had been made to enhance the power of the League whilst building a system of peaceful arbitration and security, and proposals for a disarmament conference had been made at Geneva.

B. Baldwin s Second Cabinet, November 1924 to June 1929

The Conservative preference for a limited, regional security arrangement rather than what they perceived as blanket, worldwide commitments, led to their ultimate rejection of the Protocol. This was a profound disappointment for Labour, who viewed with alarm the potential implications of the rejection: since the French would be left with no guarantee of security, and the process of disarmament could not be begun, then the French would be driven to seek security in alliances outside of the League and the proposed disarmament conference would be doomed. The conciliation of Germany could not be continued since the Allies would have failed to fulfil their previous commitment to disarm as laid down in the Covenant and before that the Versailles Treaty, thus leaving Germany with the conviction that only *her* arms were to be restricted. The Conservative government's initial prevarication over the issue had already led to a crisis over Germany's fulfilment of its disarmament obligations: the Allies reneged on the agreement to evacuate the Rhineland after five years, instead recommending its prolongation since they believed Germany had defaulted in carrying out the disarmament conditions of the treaties. Labour condemned this move as illegal and hardly conducive to the consolidation of peace.

However, conciliation was too attractive a proposition to abandon completely, and in view of domestic and European expectancy that the Conservatives ought to continue, albeit in their own fashion, the good work Labour had begun. Their position was made evident in a letter received by Austen Chamberlain on his appointment as Foreign Secretary:

> Great Britain and the United States are the only two nations that have the power, and a public opinion back of that power, necessary to lead mankind through the paths of peace toward a material reduction of armaments. The League of Nations is the only practical instrument by which this can be done, and, unhappily, the U.S., at the moment, refuses to use it as effectively as might be done to accomplish this object, therefore the hope of the

> world lies largely in your hands and those of the Prime Minister.[64]

The Conservatives devised an alternative plan based on the guarantee of the current territorial status on the Rhine; that is to say the Franco/German frontier and the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland were declared permanent and inviolable, to be guaranteed by Great Britain and Italy. Rejecting the Protocol on the grounds that it entailed excessive obligations, the Conservatives had substituted a treaty which made the British government the effective guarantor of that treaty, and not the League, which, with the Italian government had the responsibility of enforcing the principle of compulsory arbitration on the other parties. The Labour Opposition argued that the treaty was partial and liable to return the international scene to the post-war system of sectional and thus potentially dangerous groupings. However, the Conservatives perceived the Locarno Pacts as a reasonably close continuation of the conciliatory policy begun by Labour.

Thus did Europe move into the "pale sunlight of Locarno" as Churchill phrased it. The divergence in attitude and policy between MacDonald and Chamberlain was a basic but important one: Chamberlain wanted conciliation with Germany not on the merits of her case, as MacDonald tended, but because of the desire shared by the

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[64] Public Record Office, Austen Chamberlain papers, Letter from William House of New York, PRO, FO, 800, 256.

Conservatives to bring her back into the European scene as a balance against France, and to re-establish the old balance of power. The Conservative perception of the implications of the Locarno treaties likewise differed from the Labour intentions for the Protocol: a good majority of the Conservative cabinet saw it as a means of freeing Great Britain from the necessity of involvement in continental affairs, whereas it had in fact made Britain a dominating factor in European affairs -- but not in the way MacDonald would have liked. Labour saw the Protocol as being an additional facet of the system of collective security they were attempting to build in international relations, and a complement to the League. The Conservatives perceived the pacts as a re-establishment of isolationism, and the opportunity to stem the tide of internationalism the Labour government had initiated.

Despite the fact that the Geneva Protocol was effectively dead, Labour continued to urge the government to take advantage of the potential of the League to establish an international security system along the lines Labour itself advocated, as opposed to the "sectional alliances which lead to a growing tension between the nations of Europe, contribute to the sense of insecurity prevalent amongst the Governments, and indefinitely postpone any proposals of a substantial advance towards disarmament."[65] Thus on the receipt of the proposal for the Kellogg-Briand Pact, a move made by the French to the United States to enhance her security (a move anticipated by Labour), which outlined a treaty renouncing war, and which the U.S. desired to make multi-lateral, the Labour Party encouraged the government to seize this opportunity to support a pact which could be made an effective instrument for the maintenance of world peace. MacDonald's opinion that it should be accepted "without attaching reservations" was not shared by the Conservatives, who were only prepared to accept the pact under certain conditions.[66] These conditions were tantamount to a British Monroe Doctrine, in that Britain would agree to it in principle only where it would not impinge on areas vital to the safety of the Empire. The government also sought to emphasise that it should have no restrictions where the rights of self-defence were concerned.Needless to say, Labours reaction to this reserved response was highly critical. These Conservative demands had largely altered the original intent of the Pact, and the stipulations as regards self-defence, although recognised in the Covenant as a legitimate excuse for war, seemed to be so elastic as to give the British government provision to object to any interference in any area which could be loosely construed as vital to the interests of the British Empire.

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[65] 208 H.C. Deb., July 11, 1927. Cols 1761-62.
[66] 217 H.C. Deb. May 10, 1928. Col 446.

The real test of the effectiveness of the Pact would be whether or not it had, as a logical progression, the adoption of a policy of disarmament, since "the substantial justification for our colossal armaments, and our swollen expenditure, no longer exist if this Pact is a real renunciation of war on our part."[47] The result, in the negative, did not take long to materialise. It appeared that the government's attitude towards disarmament had not changed with its guarded agreement to outlaw war, as Henderson noted during a resolution for world peace and disarmament at the annual conference of the Labour Party held at Birmingham in 1926:

> The government is pursuing, in a pre-war spirit, a policy which is preventing any progress being made towards Disarmament, and which assumes that the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Pact for the Outlawry of War, and the Locarno Treaties, have contributed nothing to the security of the world.[48]

The failure of the Geneva Protocol had delayed the organisation of a disarmament conference, or, as Henderson phrased it: "This government destroyed a comprehensive plan for the organisation of World Peace known as the Geneva Protocol, and thus made it impossible to hold a Disarmament Conference in 1925."[49] Labour had been pressing constantly for some move to be made in this sphere, but to no avail, and even when the League Assembly attempted to implement Articles VIII and IX of the Covenant by requesting the Council to make preparatory arrangements for a conference on the reduction of armaments, the British delegation insisted on the *preparatory* nature of the arrangements, since it felt that the time was not right for an actual conference, and opposed the actual fixing of a date for one. But their reactionary attitude to the whole question with the Preparatory Disarmament Commission was a major factor which led to the resignation of Viscount Cecil, their representative on the Commission, chiefly because they opposed the limit of expenditure on armaments as outlined in the 1927 Naval Conference in Geneva.[70] Cecil had continually come up against the opposition of the Cabinet over an agreement to reduce and limit armaments, and had earlier complained bitterly to Baldwin over the indifference of the War Office and the Admiralty on the question of disarmament.[71]

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[47] 220 H.C. Deb. July 30, 1928. Cols.1818-1860.
[48] Public Record Office, Arthur Henderson Papers, PRO, FO, 800. 282, fs. 72.
[49] *Ibid*.

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[70] *Ibid.*

[71] British British Library, Lord Cecil of Chelwood Papers, 51080. December 12, 1925. Cecil had first become aware of the difficulty of his position as a man holding internationalist views within the Conservative Party on his return from the Peace Conference. In his autobiography he records the growing rift between himself and the Party, and becoming "more and more out of touch with official Conservatism." Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, *All The Way*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton), 1949, p. 218. In personal communication with the author, historians have argued that Cecil's resignation was inevitable given the rift between himself and the Party which stretched back some years. Whilst he was definitely on the left of the Party, the evidence available would seem to suggest that the disagreement over disarmament was the deciding factor in his resignation.

The Commission was to labour on for five years without results. The failure of the Geneva Conference set the seal on all future attempts as regards disarmament. In Labour's opinion, it was necessary to have all three legs of the tripod of security, arbitration and disarmament working to secure agreement, and since the Conservative government did not agree compromise could not be reached. Indeed MacDonald regarded the breakdown at Geneva to be a natural failure since disarmament could not be achieved in the absence of a security agreement."It cannot be done unless we give a full security ... The value of a full security is that when you have got it you immediately begin to practise those habits of arbitration and disarmament that enable you to get into the habit of a peace-loving people."[72] Other League members did realise the importance of the relationship between the three, and attempted to revive some semblance of the Geneva Protocol as the most effective means of establishing the security necessary for the achievement of disarmament.[73]

Baldwin's administration had all but wrecked the process Labour had begun in 1924; despite professing a belief in international arbitration at Locarno, the Conservative government had refused to embody this belief by committing itself to ratify the Protocol or by accepting the jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice. It had done nothing to further the cause of disarmament. One can only speculate as to the import of such actions for the Conservative government in the 1929 election, in which it was resoundingly defeated, but perhaps their record in foreign policy had an effect on the electorate, and lost them support to the Labour Party.

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[72] 210 H.C. Deb., November 24, 1927. Col. 2097, also Cols. 2089-97.

[73] Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy* , p. 62.

C. The Second Labour Cabinet, 1929. Return to Pacification

> At the last election there is no doubt that the question of peace was one which operated very largely and I think with the new voters, it was the love of women for peace which induced the electors to return you to power.[74]

It is not too extreme a speculation to consider that Viscountess Gladstone was partially correct in assuming that the women's vote helped determine the outcome of the election. The Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act of 1928 removed the discrimination imposed by the 1918 Act by giving the vote to all women of the age of twenty-one. If the following sentiments were common, then the womens vote was important:

> In his recent letter arguing the old case that women should not have a further extension of the franchise because they are not fighters, Mr P.E. Roberts of Worcester College, alludes to women as the sex they (men) were "shielding and protecting" in the war.

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[74] Public Record Office, Henderson papers, Letter from Viscountess Gladstone to Arthur Henderson, FO 800, 280, fs 76.

> An old, but bad argument. For who are they who fight? Men. If men did not fight, women would not need "shielding and protecting" from war. It is a queer kind of security which fighting men have given to women down all the ages. I would give my vote every time to men and women who would "shield and protect" me by accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice; by making all-in arbitration treaties with all the world; by disarmament. We shall be protected by the abolition of war and in no other way."[75]

Certainly the question of peace was an important factor, indeed the Labour Party had run on this platform , emphasizing its belief in "the renunciation by international treaty, without resevation or qualification, of the use of war as an instrument of national policy, and the negotiation through the League of Nations of international agreements."[76] Labour's foreign policy would be based on six pillars of peace: the renunciation of war, disarmament, arbitration, open diplomacy, economic and political cooperation. Their election reflected popular sympathies for the pacifist stance of the Labour Party and the war resistance of the ILP, along with disatisfaction at Baldwin's half-hearted pursuit of peace. Lord Cecil wrote to MacDonald congratulating him on achieving office: "I cannot tell you what a relief it is to think that a genuine and wholehearted Peace Ministry is installed in office at this critical time."[77]

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[75] British Library of Political and Economic Science, WILPF papers, Letter from Mrs A.M. Swanwick, Section 4, 5/3.
[76] Platform of the Labour Party, 1928, in W.C. Langsam, *Documents and Readings in the History of Europe since 1918* (Chicago: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1951).

Thus the Labour Party was given the opportunity to take up its work in the international field where it had left off in 1924. One of the initial resumptions of policy concerned the Soviet Union. MacDonald had attempted in 1924 to promote economic and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and had succeeded in concluding two Anglo-Soviet Treaties. However, these were defeated in parliament due to a combination of Conservative and Liberal opposition, and this marked the end of diplomatic relations between the two countries until Labour resumed office in 1929. Labour, whilst in opposition, had continuously pressed the government to resume economic agreements with the Soviet Union, arguing that this would increase trade and help establish international peace.[78] But not until 1929 were diplomatic relations restored between the two governments. Shortly afterwards a trade agreement was reached, notwithstanding the constant opposition of the Conservatives, who, between the *de jure* signature of the agreement and the *de facto* application of such, raised about 700 parliamentary questions regarding the negotiation with the Soviet Union.[79]

Labours plan for international cooperation entailed the reconciliation of Garmany, and to this end participated in the Young Plan, the financial agreement for the final settlement of German reparations. Agreement was also reached for the complete evacuation of the Rhineland by Allied troops.

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[77] Public Record Office, Ramsey MacDonald papers, PRO 30/69, 672 (pt.1), fs.128-9, June 21, 1929.
[78] 203 H.C. Deb., March 3, 1927. Cols. 624-5.
[79] Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p. 73.

The primary aim of the Labour government was disarmament, and there were 140 members of the ILP in parliament demanding this.[80] A Parliamentary Peace Group had been formed, composed mainly of Labour M.P.s within parliament who were leading advocates of disarmament.[81] The government had the solid backing of the LNU, representing the public who had voted in Labour to oversee the process of disarmament. A press statement made by them after a deputation to the Foreign Office in July 1929 announced:

> Mr Norman Angell, ... thought that public opinion would support the government up to any lengths. It was his impression that in international affairs the general public were always in advance of declared policy. ... Mr Henderson in reply to the deputation said that the Government had no shadow of a doubt as to the value of the work of the Union in keeping international affairs out of party politics and in educating public opinion: "I think that this Government would have made a profound mistake if it had not interpreted that public opinion to the extent that it already has done by its references in the First Gracious Speech from the Throne."[82]

Since the Labour government viewed the acceptance of the principle of arbitration as an important fore-runner of a treaty of disarmament, it declared its intention of signing the Optional Clause of the statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, which would further the commitment to settle all international disputes by pacific means. Signatories to the Optional Clause obligated themselves to accept the jurisdiction of the Court. Labour's move was criticised by the Conservatives, who would have preferred more reservations to be included in the acceptance. This impetus to the cause of arbitration was continued by the attempt of the Labour government to amend the Covenant by eliminating the right to resort to war recognised as legitimate in Article XII, "three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision or the report of the Council", and in Article XV if the Council failed to reach a report unanimously agreed to by the members not party to the dispute.[83] This provoked fresh protest from the Conservative Opposition, who perceived the proposed amendments as entailing more obligations than they were willing to assume, as was made plain in the correspondence columns of The Times during February 1930.[84] Labour's argument, along with that of the League Committee which was considering the proposals, was that the amendments to Articles XII, XIII, and XV would not change the obligations already contracted by the League members under Article XVI of the Covenant. Rather the reverse; since they were aimed at ensuring the pacific settlement of all disputes, then the possibility of war would be reduced and with it the burden of sanctions. The Labour government also submitted to the League as a model treaty a convention to strengthen the means of preventing war, which was made the basis for a General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War.[85] However, this was to fall prey to the electoral defeat of Labour in 1931, since the incoming Conservatives would not consent to its ratification.

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[80] C.L.Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940* (London: Methuen & Son, 1956), p. 363.

[81] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 128.

[82] Henderson papers, FO 800, 280, fs.76. July 12, 1929. For the speech from the Throne see F.W.S.Craig, ed., *The Most Gracious Speeches to Parliament 1900-1974* (London: MacMillan Press, 1975), p. 74.

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[83] See the *Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany.*

[84] The Times, February 20; 25; 27; correspondence between Lord Lothian, Lord Cecil and Austen Chamberlain.

MacDonald's aim of convening a general disarmament conference was initiated with the Five Power Naval Conference which, as a result of the ironing-out of Anglo-American differences, convened in London in January, 1930. This represented the first concrete step towards disarmament although the Conservative Opposition were concerned that the parity that had been conceded to the United States was tantamount to inferiority for Great Britain. On the basis of the success of the London Conference the Labour government brought the issue of land armaments before the Tenth Assembly of the League, expressing the wish to see the conclusion of the work of the Preparatory Commission. To this end, a date was set for a World Disarmament Conference in February 1932, and in recognition of the prominent role played by Labour in advancing preparations for the summoning of it, Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, was elected to preside over the proceedings. However, the Labour government could not complete this, the aim for which it had strived since 1924, as it found itself out of office after the 1931 general election.

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[85] Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p. 83.

Ironically, for a government with such enthusiasm for work in the international sphere, it was to be events on the international front which paved the way for its downfall. It was the great misfortune of the Labour government to be elected into office just as the precarious structure of the post-war international economy began to disintegrate. The British economy, never particularly stable since the War, took a desperate turn precipitated by the deepening world depression. With the Wall Street Stockmarket Crash, investment and trade the world over was immediately affected. In Great Britain, the fall off of trade, raising of tariffs and abandonment of the gold standard caused a massive rise in unemployment. Instead of tackling the problem with the forthright measures it demanded, the Labour government continued in the half measures pursued by its predecessors. Owing to the fact that it was a minority government and had to rely to a great extent on support from the Liberals, it was from the outset restricted to policies less radical than it would have liked. On this front it attracted great criticism from the left of the Government and the party, who placed great hope in Labour's grand plans for welfare programmes and redistribution.[86] By the same token, the Conservatives attacked what limited steps Labour was taking, in particular what they saw as the government's wasteful expenditure and borrowing.[87] With its hands tied, the Labour government proved incapable of coping with the economic and financial crisis, and MacDonald decided to subordinate the aims on which the Party based the majority of its support, that is to say the protection of working-class interests, to seeming national considerations. Hence the foundation of the first National Government in August, 1931. MacDonald remained as Prime Minister, but only three other Labour men were in the Cabinet. It was a harsh blow for those who had perceived the Labour government to be the agency of national and international regeneration. Nationally, it seemed to be a betrayal of the working man, and internationally it was to prove a betrayal of the pacifist. It is events from this point on which emphasise the divergence, set in the 1920s, of the pacifist stance of the Labour Party, and the increasingly isolationist path taken by the Conservatives.

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[86] The main bone of contention was the Unemployment Insurance Bill of November 1929, which, whilst altering previous grievances of the working man, did not, in the opinion of the leader of the ILP, Maxton, and others, go far enough. See Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p. 362.

[87] In connection with the Unemployment Insurance Bill.

D. Internationalism as a manifestation of socialist foreign policy

From a consideration of the pacifist movement during the decade following the war, and an analysis of Labour's foreign policy during the same period, a similarity in aim and intent can be detected. The prospects of the Labour Party, whilst in government, for realising the objectives on which its foreign policy was based, and for which it had the solid backing of the pacifist sections of the public, were optimistic. The revulsion against war and the methods of policy which were perceived to have hastened the onset of war produced in a large number of people the readiness to agree with the aims of conciliation, arbitration and disarmament. A brief analysis of socialist foreign policy is integral to an understanding of the meshing together of the beliefs of the Labour Party and of the pacifist movement during the 1920s, and will aid in the understanding of the wide divergence between this common faith and the reactions of the Conservative Party to the pacifist movement and their foreign policy during the 1930s.

At the root of Labour's foreign policy lay the desire and determination to bring to an end the traditional method of foreign policy, that of power politics, which had determined British foreign policy until they came to power. This method had elevated British interests above all others; Palmerston summed up the spirit by saying Britain had neither eternal allies to help nor perennial enemies to fight but rather only permanent interests to promote. Whilst to the continentals this mode of behaviour gave rise to the nick-name of 'perfidious Albion', national interests and the welfare of the Empire depended upon a Europe dominated by no one, single power, but a balance of power. It was this balance of power and the behaviour of statesmen who had personal as well as national interests to protect, which the Labour Party repudiated. Such a system, entailing secret diplomacy and deals with other states, was seen by many, and not only socialists, as being one of the causes of the First World War. This was reflected in the formation of the UDC, which was created to help the British people secure control over British foreign policy. Ramsey MacDonald was a founder of the UDC, and his verdict on traditional diplomacy was shared by the rank and file of the Labour Party: The whole corrupting system should be swept away.It stands like a dirty old slum area, full of vermin and disease.[illegible] The Labour Party intended to carry out its foreign policy as an extension of its domestic policy, that is to say in keeping with such socialist principles as justice and cooperation. In furtherence of this aim, Labour accepted as its responsibility the reform of the international system, just as it would have to transform the domestic system to accomodate its socialist ideals. The foreign policy of any

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[illegible] Michael R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 5.

Labour government would be a reflection of its internal policy, and both would be socialist oriented.

That this policy would not be traditionalist then, was the first characteristic. Several more distinguishing features can be detected in the development of a concrete foreign policy of the Labour Party, both in government and out, during the 1920s. Although Labour never had a sharply defined doctrine, such as had developed in the Russian brand of socialism, as R.H.Tawney wrote: "Socialism presents itself not as the application of a clearly conceived and sharply defined theory, but as a tendency."[89] , these principles did come to have some theoretical status in Labour's foreign policy.[90]

(i) Internationalism

Labour disagreed with the nationalist-centred policy: "So long as the nation-state refused to acknowledge a higher moral authority than its own arbitrary will, the international system would remain fragmented into multiple autonomous units and so be conducive to endemic conflict, turmoil and war."[91] Thus Labour's aim was an international community, and the creation of the League of Nations was seen as the first step in achieving this aim. Labour attempted to make the League the centre of British policy, as opposed to purely national interests. "You have to put loyalty to the League of Nations above loyalty to your country."[12] Labour's foreign policy, whilst in office, demonstrated this attitude quite clearly.

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[89] R.H. Tawney, *The British Labour Movement* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 162.
[90] I have used Gordon's classification here.
[91] Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus*, p. 14.

(ii) International working-class solidarity

It was a basic tenet of socialism that since wars were caused by capitalist anarchy, and only capitalists such as munitions makers or professional diplomats could gain by war, then the working classes of all countries should join together and present a common front against the real enemy, capitalism, and refuse to fight each other. The necessity for international cooperation to prevent war was one of the reasons Labour sought membership in the Second International, and the basis for numerous resolutions at party conferences to refuse to bear arms. The correspondence of the first International Secretary of the Labour Party, William Gillies, includes letters from such figures as Sydney Webb on the possibility of organising a general strike should war be declared.[13]

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[12] 281 H.C. Deb., November 7, 1933. Col.148.

[13] Headquarters of the British Labour Party, Transport House, London, William Gillies papers, 133-136, December 27, 1937 and January 7, 1938. See also 62-64, July 12, 1922, correspondence with the secretary of Oxford City Labour Party.

This principle of working-class solidarity also found expression in pro-Soviet sentiment, as was evidenced in Labour's attempts during the 1920s to resume diplomatic relations, and gain economic agreements with, the Soviet Union.

(iii)Anti-capitalism

Labour determined to dispose of the vestiges of traditional foreign policy, which it saw as a mere vehicle serving the interests of the capitalist ruling classes, by democratising foreign policy, as the UDC advocated. Imperialism was viewed as capitalism in its international aspect, and thus the problem had to be tackled at the roots, i.e. domestically. To transform a capitalist nation into a socialist one would be to transform the international system, since capitalist nations by nature sought international expansion, which in turn would increase the likelihood of war. Removing the domestic economic reasons for imperialist behaviour would reduce the possibility of war.

(iv)Anti-militarism

Belief in a community of nations, protected by collective security, would mean that states no longer had to rely on force as a major policy instrument. The use of force in the traditionalist mode was seen as both immoral and likely to bring about a general war. Reliance on a higher structure, such as the League, to regulate international affairs , conformed to Labour's anti-militarism. As previously outlined, Labour fervently supported disarmament throughout the 1920s.

An interesting analysis which can be applied to Labour's foreign policy, and which can explain the essential difference between it and the policy pursued by the Conservatives during the same period, was devised by political historian, Ernest R. May.[14] He wrote of policy derived from deep seated axiomatic beliefs in comparison to that derived from a precise weighing of the profit and loss likely to occur. Axiomatic beliefs are the result of historic experience, lessons drawn from previous actions and events. Labour's foreign policy was essentially of this nature with, however, an important adaptation: the Labour Party approached the conduct of foreign policy with no heritage, or lessons from the past. Since it had never before achieved office, and had only a short history itself, it had no guiding principles as to adherence to certain policies or precepts based on experience. Thus Labour had only ideological conceptions to work with, and this explains Labour's faith that it was possible to adopt habits of peaceable action in foreign policy affairs and so build a peaceful international system devoid of war. Their lack of a past was considered an asset; they denounced the balance of power system which had led to the outbreak of World War One, and since they had no part in the secret diplomacy preceding the war, no accusing fingers could be pointed in their direction when they unfolded plans for so un-traditional a policy as conciliation, arbitration and disarmament. All that was necessary was policy which would veer the European mind away from the thought that war was an accepted instrument of policy, and replace it with arbitration and the pacific settlement of disputes. Ideology could become social reality; as MacDonald announced in 1925 to parliament, "Give us ten years of the working of the (Geneva) Protocol, and we will have Europe with a new habit of mind."[15]

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[14] Ernest R. May, "The Nature of Foreign Policy: The Calculated Versus The Axiomatic", *Daedalus*, 91:4 (1962), 651-667.

In contrast, Conservative foreign policy was very much based on formulations derived from means-ends calculations. The balance of power system, and Great Britain's position within that system depended on such calculations. The national interest was put before all others, and no treaty was entered into without some profit to this interest. Therein lies the explanation for the Conservative opposition to the eagerness with which Labour governments commited themselves to obligations perceived as contrary to the national interest.

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[15] Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus*, p. 53.

IV. THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE 1930s

Pacifist sentiment increased considerably during the 1930s, and pacifist activity was intense and widespread. The primary reason for this continuing trend and marked upsurge was, during the early 1930s, the belief that disarmament could be achieved, and that the League, although empowered to impose military sanctions, would in reality achieve success in resolving international disputes by only using moral sanctions and the force of condemnation of world public opinion on any errant state. This belief was held strong and fast throughout the 1930s, but in the latter half agitation for disarmament gained an added impetus from the government's apparant inability to achieve it. This change in attitude coincided with the change in government in 1935 from the Conservative dominated governments led by Ramsey MacDonald to the purely Conservative government led by Baldwin. Baldwin was later to decry the pacifist mood of the country during the early 1930s, and insisted that this was to blame for his tardiness in rearming and his policy of appeasement. It is here argued that he misread the mood of the country, and based his policies of appeasement on critical misperceptions of events both domestic and international.

A. Public Opinion and Disarmament

The National Peace Council (NPC), which had been set up in 1908 to organise National Peace Congresses, was an umbrella organisation which coordinated the peace movement. As it announced on a poster advertising the Congress at Oxford in July 1933, "The National Congress brings together representatives of the important religious, political, industrial and social organisations in Great Britain for consideration of international problems and the consolidation of the British movement for peace."[16] Under the leadership of Gerald Bailey, the NPC increased its activities, and its collaboration with the Labour Party, which it saw as a useful ally in the fight for peace. Study of the papers of William Gillies, the first International Secretary of the Labour Party (1920-1944) demonstrate Bailey's constant attempts to inform Gillies of what was happening within the peace movement. The Labour Party in its turn distributed NPC postcards along with its circulars;[17] gave cooperation and speakers for the NPC Congress in

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[16] Transport House, William Gillies papers, WG/PC 197. Among the members of the Honorary National Commitee of the NPC were Lord Allen of Hurtwood (Clifford Allen, honoured in 1932), Norman Angell, Archbishop of Birmingham, Vera Brittain, Lord Cecil of Chelwood, Arthur Henderson, George Lansbury, H.G. Wells.

[17] *Ibid*. WG/PC 158, 160. June 15, 1932.

May, 1932[98] and Labour Party publications appeared in the annually published Peace Year Books.[99] The Council did much to inform and stir public opinion about the resumption of the Disarmament Conference in February, 1932; a circular was sent to its constituent organisations and societies urging action: "It is imperative that there should be a widespread expression of public opinion directed to the Conference in the course of the next few weeks", and asking members to send an enclosed resolution to Sir John Simon, Ramsey MacDonald and Arthur Henderson in attendance at the Conference, and to local M.P.s and newspapers. In the same circular, mention was made of published material available for "widespread propagation and enlightenment".[100] A pamphlet was published marking the reconvening of the Disarmament Conference, and stressing the might of public feeling behind it:

> Following several years of preparation by the League of Nations, the first World Disarmament Conference opened at Geneva on February 2, 1932. On that day nearly 250 delegates representing some 60 nations and 1,700,000,000 people, listened to an inaugural address delivered by Mr Arthur Henderson, President of the Conference, in which he claimed that the making of a treaty effecting a substantial reduction and limitation of armaments involved "the whole issue of peace and war". He refused to contemplate even the possibility of failure in this task -- "for if we fail no one can foretell the evil consequences that might ensue. The world wants disarmament. The world needs disarmament. We have it in our power to help to fashion the pattern of future history.

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[98] *Ibid.*, WG/PC 152, May 5, 1932.
[99] *Ibid.*, WG/PC 180-185.
[100] *Ibid*,. WG/PC 148, April 13, 1932.

> Mankind is looking to this Conference with its unrivalled experience and knowledge, its unchallengeable representative authority and power, its massed wisdom and capacity, to bestow the gift of freedom from the menace to peace and security that the maintenance of huge national armaments must ever be." Four days later, on February 6, a special session of the Conference was handed over to the unofficial organisations to voice the support and enthusiasm of the peoples of the world. The President read telegrams from all parts of the world before the presentation of petitions organised by the great national and international societies. There were petitions signed in total by over 10 million people.[101]

The signing of such petitions had been encouraged by both the NPC and the Labour Party for some months before the Conference. An article published in the Daily Herald in November 1931 by the Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), William Citrine, likewise shows that the TUC was urging its members to cooperate along the same lines:

> Against war the stongest safeguard is public opinion. The people themselves have at their disposal a force which, if intelligently applied, can make war impossible. Here, therefore, is a practical service that the rank and file of our organised movement throughout the country shall have to take in the interests of peace and disarmament. It is our task to organise public opinion solidly ... millions of signatures are waiting to be collected and every signature is a vote for peace and World Disarmament.[102]

The NPC organised a demonstration in July 1931, in support of the Conference, the speakers including Ramsey MacDonald, Baldwin and Lloyd George; this was followed by a United

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[101] *Ibid*., WG/PC 194. Emphasis in original.
[102] *Ibid*., International Department, ID/DIS/5/5.

Churches Disarmament demonstration in November at the Albert Hall, with speakers Dick Sheppard and George Lansbury.[103] A disarmament demonstration was sponsored by the TUC, the Labour Party, the London Trades Council and the London Labour Party.[104] The February 1932 issue of The Labour Woman, Labour's journal for working women, was devoted to disarmament. "Disarmament is the responsibility of the Mothers of the World."[105]

It is easy to speculate, with hindsight, that had the Disarmament Conference convened during the 1920s it would have met with more succcess. As it was, the world was suffering a severe economic crisis and the inadequacy of the League member states to enforce its principles had been clearly demonstrated over the Manchuria affair. Thus the League's discussions on disarmament faltered over conflicting interpretations of national security. Examination of letters to The Times during the close of 1932 show the gradual change in public attitudes from enthusiasm and premature congratulations as to the proceedings of the Conference, to disappointment at the lack of success it was achieving: a letter in the edition dated October 12, 1932, signed by Lady Astor, Lord Cecil and Lloyd George, urging courageous and determined British policy over the armaments crisis; on October 15 was a letter containing likewise sentiments signed by the Mayors of York, Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford; and yet another on the 17 signed by Oxford College Fellows. An article appeared in the November 4 issue, declaring that there was "no subject with which British opinion is so deeply concerned" as disarmament.[106] Other signs of the importance attached to the Conference included a national memorial addressed to the Prime Minister on October 19 1932, signed by 340 "distinguished people"; a deputation on October 20 from all Protestant churches expressing disappointment at the lack of success of the Disarmament Conference, but pledging support for the P.M. in leading the disarmament initiative, signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishops of London, Guildford, Lichfield, Liverpool, Salisbury and Southwark among others. On the day after, the Prime Minister received a deputation of thirty people representing the TUC General Council. A declaration supported by the heads of 620 secondary schools including Eton, Westminster, Charterhouse and Rugby was sent to the Prime Minister on November 11, testifying "to the overwhelming force of public opinion in favour of a drastic reduction of arms".[107]

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[103] Ibid ., ID/DIS/5/10, November 9, 1931.
[104] Ibid., ID/DIS/6/10.
[105] Ibid., ID/DIS/6/11.

The great hopes for a collective peace system were very much alive during the early 1930s. Gillies' correspondence shows that there was an active interest in the legislation of a Peace Act, which would make it legally binding in

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[106] The Times, October 12 and 15, and November 4, 1932.
[107] Included in the NPC pamphlet "The Peoples Voice", listing manifestations of alert opinion. Transport House, Ibid., ID/DIS/1/38.

British law to abide by the Covenant in the first instance, and also the Locarno and Kellogg Pacts. Figures involved in this plan included the eminent international lawyer, Professor Hersh Lauterpacht, ex-solicitor general Sir Stafford Cripps and Philip Noel-Baker, with Sir John Fischer Williams who saw the intent of the Act "to compel all future British governments to observe their treaty obligations." The idea was devised probably in response to the Conservative government's renegation of the responsibilities and commitments enshrined in such pacts as Locarno, and from the alarm and disappointment that they could achieve nothing at the Disarmament Conference. The real object of the Act, according to Henderson, is displayed in this passage from his pamphlet on Labour's foreign policy:

> Like other countries we are signatories of the Treaties renouncing war and organising peace ... but, like other countries we have not yet brought our national law into harmony with our new international obligations. Public opinion at home does not realise that we are bound to settle our disputes by arbitration, to cooperate with other nations in common measures to keep the peace and restain aggression ... Since the real restraining power of any law lies in the general belief that it will be observed, and since Great Britain can do more than any other country to create that belief throughout the world,, it is obvious that this element of doubt about our national attitudes towards the Covenant, the Locarno Treaties and the Briand/Kellogg Pact is a matter of the highest practical importance. For these reasons the next Labour government should ... pass a new Peace Act through Parliament.[108]

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[108] *Ibid*., WG/PC 261-264, October, 1933.

Thus it can be seen as a propaganda exercise, and one which would incorporate into the statute book the principles of the collective peace system to which Labour ascribed; as Sir John Fischer Williams wrote:

> What it is concerned with is public opinion, how to make our existing treaty obligations a living reality in the minds of all good citizens ... A campaign in favour of a Peace Act and the debates accompanying its passage would be a splendid education in the elements of what our membership of League implies ... The Act would put an end to the irresponsibility of governments vis-a-vis their citizens in the field of foreign affairs.[109]

That a "real will to peace existed throughout Britain" as Vera Brittain was later to record,[110] also gave rise to several events later to be castigated as leading the government into a policy of appeasement, and thus war. However, the question of which contemporary analysis of the international situation has best stood the test of time - that of the peace movement (and to a large extent the Labour Party), or that of the Conservative dominated governments of the 1930s - it is here argued that the peace movement supported a course of action more in tune with the idealism which had found expression in the internationalist and anti-war treaties and conventions of the 1920s.

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Brittain, *Testament*, p. 197.

B. The King & Country Debate, February 1933.

On Thursday, February 9 1933, during the fourth debate of the term, the Oxford Union debated and passed by 275 votes to 153 the motion "That this House will under no circumstances fight for its King and Country".[11] This event was reported and discussed in both the local press and the national newspapers, with little comment and attracting little attention. Not until a group of old Oxonians wrote to the Daily Telegraph expressing their disgust as to this evidence of communist tendencies was the debate catapulted to the forefront of the press and attracted national and international comment.

An analysis of the motion shows that it was prompted by feelings of exasperation at the seeming inability of British statesmen to stem the general worsening of the international situation. The visiting proposer of the motion, Cyril Joad, was well known for his pacifist views, and an extremely good speaker. His oratorial skills were far superior to those of K.R.F. Steel-Maitland, and the Hon. Quinton Hogg, who opposed the motion. By all accounts Joad gave an entertaining and convincing speech, and this was essentially what won the day.[112] The debate may well have passed virtually unnoticed, as had all previous ones which could have been construed as important statements of youth, had it not been for a letter which appeared in the Saturday edition of the Daily Telegraph, headlined "Disloyalty at Oxford. Gesture towards the Reds", and signed by "Sixty-Four". The letter stated that the motion must have evoked "feelings of shame and disgust by thousands of Oxford men", and it was "an outrage upon the memory of those who gave their lives in the Great War."[113] "Sixty-Four" urged old Oxonions to expunge the motion, and this suggestion was taken up by Randolph Churchill. In conjunction with other former Union members he proposed such a motion at the Union on March 2. This was overwhelmingly defeated by 750 votes to 138, largely because by this time the question had turned into disgruntlement on the part of the present Union that the "old boys" should presume to interfere.

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[11] For information about the the Oxford debate I am indebted to Mr W. Perry, present warden of the Oxford Union for his assistance, and also to the librarian who made available the minute book of the period and a press cuttings book compiled by Mr Michael barsley, a participant in the debate.

On the Monday following the debate, an article appeared in the Daily Express attacking the "woozy-minded Communists, the practical jokers, and the sexual indeterminates of Oxford" for "such a contemptible and indecent action as the passing of that resolution."[114] Two days later the Express carried a report from Cambridge demanding the cancellation of the annual boat race in protest at the motion.[115] The Evening Standard declared on Monday 13: "No-one but a sand-blind partisan can ignore the fact that there is a confederacy of internationalists which at this moment is remarkably successful in muddying the wells of truth; under the patronage of the polyglot League of Nations."[116] The Times was less hysterical, merely patronising: under the heading "The Childrens Hour" it stated "the critics who take an episode of this kind tragically can have no real understanding of Oxford, or of the very limited part which the Union plays in its life, or (for the matter of that) of the kind of paradoxical theses which it is the age long habit of youth to propound in its debating societies."[117]

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[112] Martin Ceadel, "The King and Country Debate", *Historical Journal*, 22, (1979), pt. 1, 404 and Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 127.
[113] The Daily Telegraph, February 11, 1933.
[114] The Daily Express, February 13, 1933.

The more liberal Manchester Guardian did not share such views, and indeed denigrated those newspapers which did, bringing up some important points which were to be echoed in the Oxford magazine:

> A worse exhibition of newspaper hysteria than that which has followed the so called 'pacifist' resolution of the Oxford Union Society would be hard to find. "Foul Jokers", "sexual indeterminates", "posturers", "yellow cowards" -- these are epithets taken at random from those that have been applied to a body which, as its president says in a letter to us today, "are the views of those of us who are interested in politics" ... Not a word, in the columns of abuse which even mentions (let alone sympathises with) the obvious meaning of this resolution -- youth's deep disgust for the way in which past wars 'for King and Country' have been

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[115] Ibid., February 14, 1933.
[116] Evening Standard, February 13, 1933.
[117] The Times, Februry 13, 1933.

> made and in which, they suspect, future wars may be made ... But others of us beside the young no longer think this abstraction is worthy of the undiscriminating respect the world once gave it. It has been used as a Moloch to devour life too often.''[11]

The appelation "for King and Country" was a particularly important one since it was basically this which caused the uproar and delineated so clearly the views of the students and such ex-students as "Sixty-Four". Many of the students had grown up in the 1920s, and had thus been exposed to the anti-war literature as described earlier. They formulated vague feelings of pacifism based on the 'never again' attitude to the Great War. The Manchester Guardian summed up such sentiments, the disgust at the patriotic propaganda based on Kitchener's recruiting theme of "Your King and Country Needs You", by which millions had been lured to the front to die in distinctly unglorious surroundings. The phrase had, for the students, jingoistic connotations and as such was unpalatable. However, the same phrase was capable of evoking deep feelings amongst the generation which had selflessly responded to its call, and the old Oxonions included in this number were thus shocked that a younger generation could so discard such a responsibility. Hence in the words of one learned writer, "The real intention of the supporters of the Oxford resolution seems thus to have been to protest at jingoism and the cynical exploitation of patriotic idealism at a time of international jitteriness when the British government's half-heartedness over disarmament was causing it to be branded as itself a major threat to peace."[119] This view is exemplified by an article in the Oxford magazine following the debate, and is worth quoting at length:

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[11] Manchester Guardian, February 13, 1933.

> War has been portrayed to the younger generation not with the fire of the poet or the enthusiasm of the romantic chronicler, but as a terrible experience endured, or as a terrible phenomenon observed from the point of view of a patient or a doctor. Nor is this all; every leading statesman has denounced war as an unmitigated evil. By every solemn instument which governments can frame, war has been discredited as a means of international policy ... Are we, therefore to be surprised when the younger generation take these views seriously and find it difficult to reconcile them with the call to fight for King and Country?
> ...We particularly regret that the The Times should have seen fit to refer to the vote in an article entitled "The Childrens Hour". If those who conduct that journal imagine that such opinions are limited only to children they must be seriously ignorant of a large section of public opinion. Moreover, although in the opinion of The Times those who voted are too immature to judge on questions of peace and war, in the opinion of the War Office they are all of military age. Once again let us repeat, it is useless to dismiss the views of University students on this question as flippant and light. About war and peace above all things they are serious.'[120]

That the debate was symptomatic of a general feeling of disillusionment with the way in which the government was dealing with the international situation, and the abiding faith in the League of Nations, is evidenced by considering later debates during the 1930s; at the following debate on

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[119] Ceadel, *The King and Country Debate*, p. 148.
[120] *Isis*, February 16, 1933.

16 February the motion "That this House proclaims its undying faith in politicians" was defeated; during the second debate of Trinity term on May 4, the motion that "The League of Nations should be abandoned" was lost by 112 votes. If the opinions of the Oxford students can be considered indicative of the opinions of the general intellectual elite, and thus an important constituent of public opinion, then "the public" was indeed ahead of the government in its thinking. The motion "That this House would prefer fascism to socialism" debated on May 11 was defeated by 82 votes; and during the seventh meeting of Michaelmas term on June 6 the motion :"That the acceptance of the German claims to arms equality is essential to the presevation of European peace" was carried by 86 votes. Perhaps more significantly, in view of later statements by Baldwin that appeasement was only the policy he dared pursue owing to the outright pacifist and anti-military mood of the country, was the eighth debate of Michaelmas term on the 6 December, 1934, "That in the opinion of this House the League of Nations should be able to enforce its decisions, when necessary with full military measures", which was carried by 91 votes.(2)

The King and Country resolution brought together all those who agreed with its sentiments, and thus its supporters included absolute pacifists, socialists, and internationalists. Oxford's influence reached other universities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Bristol, the L.S.E., University College, London, Cardiff, Bangor, Aberystwyth, all of which passed similar resolutions.'[122] On his re-election as president of the LNU (Bebington and Bromborough branch) Lord Leverhulme referred to the resolutions at Oxford and elsewhere as an indication from the youth of the country that the sovereign state could not again expect the sacrifices offered in 1919.'[123] Perhaps the most damning allegation made of the resolution, apart from that of it being indicative of the public mood and prevented Baldwin embarking on a serious policy of rearmament, was that it influenced the dictators.'[124] From a perusal of the German newspapers which actually reported it, this would not seem to be the case. It caused no great stir; indeed the right-wing Hamburger Nachrichten of the 19 February advocated not taking "the pacifist resolution of the Union too seriously," implying that the Oxford students were merely the undergraduate gentry playing at politics; the left-ish Hamburger Echo reported on the 17 February that: "A few people are pleased at the spirit shown by the students -- in any case something is happening among the youth. Supposing something like that were to happen in

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(2) Oxford Union Minute Book.

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[122] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 201.

[123] *Oxford Union Society. King and Country Controversy 1933*, compiled by Michael Barsley.

[124] This view was supported by Winston Churchill in his war memoirs.

Nazi-Deutschland."[125] The dictators by this time had more concrete manifestations of Britain's unwillingness to challenge their expansionist moves.

To conclude, one must assume that the King and Country resolution was merely one amongst many which those politically aware students were debating from disillusionment with the government's foreign policy and its inability to make full use of the potential of the League, particularly where the issue of disarmament was concerned. That this particular one had been seized upon by the press and subsequently used as a scapegoat by politicians can be explained by the reaction of the old Oxonions in their letter to the Daily Telegraph. Mention could also be made of the peculiar position held by the University both in the press and in terms of its place within the British establishment. The debate, and the publicity surrounding it, represented an impressive manifestation of the opinion of educated youth, and was the first in a series of signals which the Conservative government chose to ignore.

C. The East Fulham by-election, October, 1933

The loss of a safe Conservative seat in the East Fulham by-election was one of a series of by-elections won by the

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[125] Hamburger Nachrichten, February 19, 1933 and Hamburger Echo, February 17, 1933. Articles in Barsley, *King and Country Controversy*.

Labour Party in a trend of swings against the National government during 1933. In so far as any by-election can be said to have been won or lost on the question of foreign policy, then the results of these elections were to a large extent a reaction against the foreign policy of the National government during the early 1930s. This is not to suggest that domestic matters were of little importance in determining the outcome of the by-election; rather they rounded off the general feelings of dissatisfaction with the National Government.

Only two candidates ran; the Labour man was one John Wilmot, and the Conservative the local Alderman, W.J. Waldron. The Liberals did not field a candidate. The Liberals decided instead to send each candidate a questionnaire concerning the issues of disarmament, unemployment, housing, tariffs and India. After consideration of the replies to these questionnaires, the Liberal Association announced: "The replies of the two candidates being considered, the Association, regarding the question of disarmament as of paramount importance, recommends all Liberal voters to give Mr Wilmot their support." The replies which had determined the great emphasis placed on disarmament by the Liberals were to the question "Will you press the Government to make further and more strenuous efforts to achieve disarmament?" Wilmot replied: "Certainly. I regard the necessity for disarmament and increasing work for peace by international cooperation through the League of Nations as of urgent and paramount importance." Waldron replied:

> I support fully every effort the Government has made and may in future make to bring about universal disarmament. I cannot agree however that the British Empire should make any further sacrifices of armaments, particularly in the defensive forces of the air and sea, without substantial cooperation from other powers. Further to lay ourselves open to attack by reducing our defenses below the line of safety would in my opinion create a situation likely to tempt aggressive nations to attack us and precipitate war; the non-aggressive strength of the British Empire is the greatest bulwark of world peace.[126]

Thus for the Liberals, attitudes on disarmament were the deciding factor. Other analyses of the by-election have shown that there was a movement of opinion against the National government's conduct of foreign policy.[127] The press was likening the current tense international situation to that which existed before 1914, and laid the blame at the feet of the Government. There existed a heightened awareness of foreign policy issues, just because the international situation was deteriorating and the Government seemed unable to do anything to prevent it. The womens vote was also a significant factor; they outnumbered men by 4,500 on the electoral role.[128] They were probably most receptive to Wilmot's talk of high rents resulting from Government legislation, high food prices as a result of tariffs and the dangers of war should the Disarmament Conference fail.[129] Waldron recognised the importance of the women's vote, telling a reporter on the Morning Post that the election would be won or lost on the women's vote.[130] Wilmot's wife appealed to women on the same questions of housing, food prices and disarmament:

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[126] Richard Heller, "East Fulham Revisited" *Contemporary History*, 6: 3, (1971), p. 179.
[127] See C.T. Stannage, "The East Fulham By-election," *The Historical Journal*, 14, (1971), 179.
[128] *Ibid*., p. 178.

> We must insist that WAR SHALL NOT BE! Remember that it is our husbands and sons that will be killed and maimed. Remember that it is on our defenceless homes that the gas bombs will fall. Do not vote for the increase in armaments! Vote for the candidate who stands for PEACE.[131]

The controversy over whether Wilmot won on the platform of disarmament and peace as opposed to domestic issues such as housing and prices is one which can never be determined conclusively. However, it would seem that an upsurge in interest in what was happening on the international scene gave the issues of peace and disarmament an uncharacteristically vital role in the by-election at East Fulham. Certainly for the Liberal voters this was the key issue, and perhaps also for the women. But it would seem to indicate an unusually high awareness of foreign policy, since it was ostensibly dissatisfaction with the National government's conduct of foreign policy which determined the vote.

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[129] See The Times editorial comment, October 24, 1933.
[130] Stannage, "The East Fulham By-election," p. 178.
[131] Heller, "East Fulham Revisited," p. 185.

Further evidence for this point can be found in the results of other by-elections held during the final months of 1933. A few weeks earlier in October, Arthur Henderson had won a resounding victory at the Clay Cross by-election. This may well have been fought primarily on the issue of disarmament, since Henderson, as an ex-Foreign Secretary and Chairman of the Disarmament Conference, was above all a pacifist, and had, in the realm of foreign affairs, an unblemished record as compared to that of the National government and the Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon. The by-elections at Kilmarnock, Rutland and Stamford, Rusholme and Skipton all show an average swing of over 20% against the National government. There was also a marked change in the Liberal vote over this period: whilst in 1929 the Liberals contested all five divisions, in 1933 only one was contested by a Liberal. The Liberal vote was going to Labour and not to the Conservative/National candidates, as the analysis of the East Fulham by-election shows.[132] These results are perhaps more than mere coincidence; rather the manifestation countrywide of dissatisfaction at the National government's conduct of foreign policy and the fears that it could lead to war.

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[132] Stannage, "The East Fulham By-election," p. 181.

D. The Peace Pledge Union

The greatest numerical evidence for the burgeoning pacifist impulse in Britain during the 1930s is to be found in the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), a convergence of the secular and the Christian streams of pacifism. The PPU was created by Dick Sheppard, Vicar of St. Martin in the Fields and later Dean of St Pauls Cathedral, from a letter sent to the press on October 16 1934, as a reaction against the failure of the Disarmament Conference and the worsening international situation. He asked that those men who thought as he did should send him a postcard worded "I renounce War and never again, directly or indirectly, will I support or sanction another."[133] with a view to ascertaining the extent of public opinion which possessed pacifist sentiments, and from this the possible organisation of a pacifist demonstration. It was not Sheppard's intention to form any fresh organisation; rather, his intent was just to gauge public opinion on the question of war. The response was quite overwhelming; within a few days the rate of postcards pouring in necessitated a special postal van for delivery. Within a few months, 30,000 had written renouncing war, and a year later this figure had risen to 80,000.[134] During the first year no organisation was set up, only offices at the house of Sheppard's close friend and colleague, Brigadier-General Frank Crozier, to cope with the business of replying to the postcards and to plan the demonstration mentioned in the letter to the press. This demonstration took place in June 1935 at the Royal Albert Hall, and it attracted 7000 men from all walks of life, and indeed, many ex-servicemen. Speeches were given by Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden and Crozier, amongst others. Sheppard told the audience: "Send me a million men like you and then any government must look out."[135] Encouraged by the reaction of the demonstration and the continuing flow of postcards, Sheppard, seeing the potential for a pacifist movement on a national basis, organised the PPU association, which came into being on May 22, 1936 in offices in Trafalgar Square. It was opened to women two months later and this provided more members so that by the end of 1936 the total membership stood at 118,000.[136] A board of sponsors was created, which formed a collective leadership under Sheppard. The sponsors included figures from the artistic, academic and political world, such as Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Vera Brittain, George Lansbury and Lord Ponsonby, former leaders of the Labour Party in the Commons and the Lords respectively. One author states that the Sponsors "comprised perhaps the most intellectually distinguished committee ever assembled by a controversial British pressure group."[137] The cross section of the differing types of inter-war pacifism as represented by the Sponsors reflected a membership which was varied in its interpretation of pacifism. The overall principle guiding the PPU was the renunciation of war, thus it attracted Christian pacifists, absolutists, socialists and internationalists. Lack of a definite policy probably encouraged this heterogeneous nature of the PPU, but it also bore witness to the remarkable ability of Sheppard to welcome into the fold so many different characters. Sheppard was a charismatic and dynamic figure; Vera Brittain described him thus: "This man of genius -- preacher, broadcaster, peace crusader, and one of the most popular human beings ever to tread London's crowded pavements."[138] The New Statesman attributed the astonishing growth of the PPU to its success in appealing "not only to the convinced absolute pacifist but to the large number of people with only slight political knowledge but with a recent realisation of the fearful imminence of war, who are fascinated by the direct simplicity of the crusade."[139]

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[133] See Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 275.

[134] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 276. Also see David C. Lukowitz, "British Pacifists and Appeasement: The Peace Pledge Union," *Contemporary History*, 9:1 (1974), 116.

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[135] Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 262.
[136] Ibid.

Throughout 1936 mass meetings and demonstrations were held which presented pacifism from all angles, with speakers from the clergy, ex-soldiers, and women. By the end of 1937 the membership had reached 135,000 with 750 constituent groups.[140] Also in 1937, the No More War Movement merged with the PPU, making it an extremely large and effective pressure group. However the year was also marked by the death of Sheppard. This was a serious blow to the pacifist movement generally, for the loss of such a charismatic and vital figure was one which it could ill afford.

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[137] Ibid.
[138] Brittain, *Testament*, p. 165.
[139] Quoted in Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 226.

The PPU represented a widespread manifestation of pacifism the like of which Britain had never before experienced. It could be considered the apotheosis of the peace movement during the 1930s, and it was certainly its most effective organisational form. But the international system had, by 1938, deteriorated to the extent that the pacifists within the PPU who were not absolute in their beliefs, but followed Sheppard's dictum "Not peace at any price"[141] , were no longer faced with the issue of prevention of war by pacifist impulse. With the collapse of the League, and Chamberlain's policy of appeasement representing the total reversal of coercionist collective security, many members resigned.[142] The road to Munich was one down which pacifists had tried to prevent Britain travelling; on reaching this destination they changed their allegiances.

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[140] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 280.
[141] Brittain, *Testament*, p. 280.
[142] Interview with Professor Tom Pocock at Mass Observation Research Archives, University of Sussex. Professor Pocock's father, a member of the PPU who had known Sheppard, resigned over Munich.

E. The League of Nations sponsored Peace Ballot 1934-35

> The Peace Ballot was the high watermark of postwar pacifism and 'Leagueomania'.[143]

The Peace Ballot, launched in 1934, was sponsored by the LNU and supported by the National Council of Labour. A coalition of thirty-nine peace organisations had conducted a house-to-house canvass of the populace to obtain the answers to six questions:

1. Should Britain remain a member of the League?
2. Are you in favour of an allout reduction of armaments by international agreement?
3. Are you in favour of the abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?
4. Should the manufacture and sale of arms for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?
5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by a) economic and non-military measures b) if necessary, military measures?

Over eleven and a half millions voted in this plebiscite, nearly 40% of the electorate; 50% of all those canvassed voted.[144] It was believed that the ballot would confirm the conviction of its originator, Lord Cecil, that the British people were strongly in favour of the League and sanctionist collective security.[145] The results are presented in Table 4.1.[146] Whilst the answers to questions one to four undoubtedly show overwhelming support for the League and its principles of disarmament, questions five (a) and (b) are the most important for the purposes of this study. The votes were almost unanimous (nine out of ten) in asserting that if a nation insisted on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by economic and non-military measures, and there was a considerable majority backing collective security with military forces (six out of ten) if this was necessary. The Peace Ballot was a tremendous affirmation of all its originators hoped it would be, and it was a blatant "appeal for militant resistance to aggression, not a manifesto of appeasement."[147] The Labour Party hailed the Ballot as "a significant experiment in domestic control of foreign policy."[148] Such a great response in favour of the League and sanctions against aggressors could not pass unnoticed within the government; and as will be examined more closely in the next chapter, it did have an effect, albeit short lived on the Government's attitude towards the Abyssinian crisis.

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[143] Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p. 542.

[144] University Defence Group in Defence Policy, *The Role of the Peace Movements in the 1930s: Who was for Munich.*(London, 1959), p. 14.

Conclusion:

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[145] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 223.
[146] University Defence Group, *Who was for Munich*, Ibid.
[147] University Defence Group, *Who was for Munich*, Ibid., p. 15.
[148] Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p. 129.

TABLE 4.1

The Results of the Peace Ballot, 1934

ANSWERS	1	2	3	4	5a	5b
For	96.0	91.0	82.0	90.0	87.0	59.0
Against	3.0	7.0	15.0	7.0	6.0	20.0
Uncertain	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4
Abstain	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	7.0	20.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total No. (in 1000s)	11,558	11,559	11,569	11,558	11,545	11,541

Source: University Defense Group, *Who*, p. 223.

The early 1930s were indeed the heyday of British pacifism. The continuing work of the various peace movements under the umbrella of the NPC did much to heighten public awareness of the international situation, and the imperative nature of the issue of disarmament, and thus increase pacifist sentiment. The growing impulse of this sentiment manifested itself in such instances as the Oxford Union resolution, the East Fulham by-election, the establishment of the PPU and the Peace Ballot. The mass of the peace movement, along with public opinion as expressed in the Ballot, was solidly in favour of the League and disarmament, and to this extent was in tune with the policies of the Labour Party. Throughout these early years the Conservative-led governments were totally out of phase with the electorate and indeed pursued policies contrary to the public mood. By the time the peace movement had a sufficient impact on the Government for it to modify its policies in response, that is to say after the Peace Ballot, the international situation had deteriorated to the extent that the League, as an effective organ for collective security, was dead, and the Conservative policy of appeasement was no substitute. The Conservative response came too late, and by the late 1930s many pacifists were supporting rearmament and preparing for war, not prepared to accept the doctrine of peace at any price, as the Conservatives seemed to.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THE 1930s: THE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH

> The failure of British policy in the inter-war years resulted from two fundamental errors -- the attempt to pursue traditional policies when British power was no longer sufficient and world conditions were no longer wholly suitable, and the pursuit of conciliation and tolerance to the point of failure to recognize evil, and in evil danger.[149]

The foreign policy pursued by the Conservative dominated governments during the 1930s[150] on the whole conformed to the Conservative tradition of foreign policy making, that is, reluctance to be committed in continental entanglements as evidenced in lack of enthusiasm for the League. The Conservatives "continued to operate on the nineteenth century assumption that Britain was, or should be, a great imperial power only marginally concerned with events on the Continent."[151] Since by the early 1930s it was becoming increasingly clear that Britain was declining as a world power, appeasement was viewed as an ideal defensive strategy to preserve her position; concessions were favoured by the Conservatives as an alternative to disruptive force which could endanger Britain even more. The Conservatives embarked on a policy of appeasement, if it can be termed a policy since it consisted for the most part of dealing with each foreign problem as it came up, and judging it on its own merits. This is not to suggest that there were not opponents of appeasement within the Conservative ranks, such figures as Churchill and Austen Chamberlain were against the drift to appeasement but since they did not hold executive office they were in no position to influence policy. This was a totally different approach than that of the Labour Party, or indeed that advocated by the peace movement. It will be seen that appeasement was not a reaction to the peace movement, rather an alternative policy to that which the peace movement would have liked to have seen enacted; as such it can hardly be considered that the peace movement had much to do with it.

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[149] P.A. Reynolds, *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1954), p. 167.
[150] Although MacDonald led the first two National governments of the 1930s, the Cabinets consisted of a majority of Conservative men. Indeed in his second administration Conservatives outnumbered Labour by over two to one. MacDonald was considered to have betrayed the Labour Party on the basis of this. When Baldwin succeeded to the leadership in 1935, his Cabinet was for all intents and purposes a Conservative one. See Neville Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 9.
[151] Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, p. 32.

A. The Manchurian Crisis

The first major violation of world peace since the Great War, and the first concrete proof of the feeble Tory interest in the League and faith in the principles of collective security, occurred with the Manchurian Crisis of

1931.[152] On somewhat flimsy pretexts, following the Mukden incident,[153] the Japanese launched the conquest of Manchuria, in a blatant act of aggression against China. The Chinese government appealed to the League under Article XI of the Covenant (concerning a threat of war), and in doing so presented the League with its first real test. The response of the Council would establish whether collective security really existed outside the realm of principle.

Great Britain had a vital role to play at Geneva, owing to several factors: she was the only great power with important interests in the Far East, and as the strongest naval power in the League and greatest world trader, no sanctionary measures (be they economic or military) would have any chance of success without her full participation. It was unfortunate that the crisis erupted at somewhat of an inopportune moment from the point of view of British domestic events: the first National government was hardly a month old, and had the pressing concern of balancing the budget; the last thing it needed was an international crisis to contend with.

China also appealed to the United States as a signatory of the Kellogg Treaty, and the attitude of the U.S. was to prove a decisive factor in shaping British policy -- in spite of the fact that the United States was not a member of the League. But League action in the economic field was to a large part dependent on this, because one third of Japanese trade was with the United States. A further weak spot in the situation was that 1932 was a Presidential election year, and thus the President, Herbert Hoover, was unlikely to approve of a strong policy. Some degree of cooperation was achieved in their joint participation in the Lytton Commission, sent by the League to assess the situation. However due to delays in its nomination, and the time taken to arrive on the scene, Japan had already inaugurated their 'independent' state of Manchukuo. While the Commission was preparing its report, a clash took place between the United States and Great Britain: U.S. Foreign Secretary Stimson had published a note declaring a doctrine of non-recognition would apply to Japans conquests in Manchuria, hoping for support from the members of the League. British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon replied to this by stating that since Japan had promised to maintain the 'open-door' in Manchuria, then Great Britain would not be making any like declaration. So consideration of immediate interests such as trade won the day for the Conservative government, and it has been argued that this lack of concurrence destroyed any hopes for resisting

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[152] For an historical account of the crisis, see Mowat, *Britain Between The Wars*, pp. 419-422, also Reynolds, *British Foreign Policy*, pp. 84-98.

[153] An explosion on a small section of the South Manchurian Railway in Muckden, still debated as to whether the bomb was planted by the Japanese or if indeed the Chinese were responsible.

Japanese aggression or maintaining the League.[154]

The Commission, finally reporting in October, acknowledged sympathy with Japanese grievances in Manchuria, but condemned Japanese aggression. Refusing to recognise Manchukuo as an independent state it recommended the setting up of an autonomous regime under Chinese sovereignty. The League adopted the report in February and in consequence, in March Japan gave her notice of resignation from the League and extended her conquests into Jehol, part of the Chinese mainland.

The main consequence of this crisis was the ominous demonstration that the League had been reduced from its prominent position as the long sought after piece of machinery to prevent war, to an incidental body which could be by-passed by any nation which so wished. The League was not an entity which by its very existence could prevent war, as a future foreign secretary was to acknowledge:

> The League is what its member states make it. If it succeeds it is because the members have, in combination with each other, the will and the power to apply the principles of the Covenant. If it fails, it is because its members lack either the will or the power to fulfill their obligations.[155]

The Conservative government had exhibited this lack of will to fulfill their obligations. Admitedly other factors have to be considered, such as the troublesome economic problems on a domestic level, and the fact that they were constrained to a certain extent by U.S. attitudes. But even with the limited support of the U.S., the Conservatives had preferred the prospect of a continuation in trade to a continuation of peace. "War against Japan, and on the basis of an abstraction? The very thought, to British leaders, was an absurdity."[156] The Manchurian crisis set a pattern for future British foreign policy: Conservative leaders through the 1930s decided on the basis of Manchuria that it was collective security which was a failure, and not that their own policies had made it so. From here on, it was easier to by-pass the League and deal with each foreign problem as it arose.

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[154] See Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p. 421, who refers to articles by Professor Zimmern in The Spectator, January 16 and March 5, 1932.

[155] Public Record Office, Samuel Hoare papers, FO 800, 295.

B. The Abyssinian Crisis

If the Manchurian crisis had shaken confidence in the British government's sincerity in seeking peace, the Abyssinian crisis destroyed what vestiges of confidence remained, and serves to highlight the increasingly obvious dichotomy between the foreign policy views of the Conservatives and of Labour and the peace movement. It marked a turning point for Labour and the peace movement in that they changed tack to openly approve of rearmament. Strongly believing fascist aggression had to be confronted, this necessitated an expanded defence programme, but within the context of the League. That this view was shared by the public was evidenced in the Peace Ballot.

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[156] Margaret George, *The Hollow Men. An Examination of British Foreign Policy Between 1933-1939* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1967), p. 74.

After a series of clashes between Italian and Abyssinian troops inside Abyssinian territory, Abyssinia appealed to the League under Article XI in January. This appeal was not immediately heard, which prompted her, after more evidence of impending Italian aggression, to appeal once more under Article XV (which required the Council to report on a dispute and to make recommendations which, if unfavourable to one of the parties, required the automatic application of sanctions under Article XVI). Italian promises of negotiation delayed action on the part of the Council, and Mussolini invaded Abyssinia in October. The League reacted immediately, voting by fifty to one to declare Italy an aggressor under Article XVI, but was soon faced with the difficulty of actually applying the sanctions.

Public opinion was very much on the side of Abyssinia against Italy.[157] Articulate opinion as expressed in The Times was quite extensive; on August 30 reference was made of the "remarkable series of letters which have lately been addressed to The Times on the subject.[158] Newsreels of the crisis were reported as provoking "manifestations of public feeling". Shots of Mussolini were greeted with booing and hissing from the audience, whereas those of the Emperor of Abyssinia brought forth bursts of cheering and applause.[159] There was a general awareness that this was the crucial test case for the effectiveness of economic sanctions against an aggressor. Attlee announced in the Commons that the dispute was "a test of the reality of the League and the sanctity of the Covenant of the League ... There is today, I believe, a great opportunity in this incident for restoring the authority of the League and the rule of law in Europe."[160] The Labour Party urged the Government "to use all the necessary measures provided by the Covenant", pledging "its firm support of any action consistent with the principles and statutes of the League in enforcing Peace," and at the annual conference in Brighton emphasized its willingness, by two million votes, to support sanctions, whether economic or military.[161]

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[157] For an illuminating account of the response of the British public see Daniel Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-36* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1975).

That the National government had endorsed the use of sanctions caused suspicion within Labour ranks, and rightly so if judged by later events. Initial Conservative reaction towards Mussolini's moves against Abyssinia was one of sympathy for Italian interests in North Africa. The scene of previous British colonial conquests, the Conservatives saw Abyssinia as a colonial area and thus saw nothing too unlawful in Mussolini's moves. Questions as to the Government's sincerity increased ~~when the~~ Conservatives announced they were to call a general election in November. It was wondered whether the motivation behind their support for sanctions lay in the fact that they were "out to win the election and not to make secure the peace of the world."[162] This was to prove not too far from the truth -- Conservative candidates ran on the platform of faith in the League, which would remain the cornerstone of British foreign policy. The Labour Party was of the opinion that the government, "fully aware that its prestige had waned and that there was a growing mistrust of its handling on international affairs," was bent on taking "electoral advantage of the public's preoccupation with the grave international situation produced by aggressive Fascism and to exploit the genuine mass feeling in support of the policy of collective security."[163] Analysis of subsequent events prove that these fears were grounded in fact: "the Conservatives' conversion to the League and the application of sanctions was recent and insincere".[164] Anthony Eden, who was to become foreign secretary at a later stage in the administration admitted this, as did L.S. Amery.[165] However the official Conservative professions won them the election as the "avowed defenders of collective peace, only to betray the cause to which it was pledged."[166]

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[158] The Times, August 30, 1935.
[159] Manchester Guardian, October 10, 1935.
[160] 302 H.C. Deb., June 7, 1935, col. 2194.
[161] Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p.p. 130-131.

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[162] 305 H.C. Deb., October 22, 1935, col. 130.

[163] Quoted in Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p. 133.

[164] Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p. 554.

And betray the cause it did. Within a month of the election, disclosures of the Hoare-Laval Pact revealed the double policy of the Conservative government. This arrangement concluded between the British Foreign Secretary and French Prime Minister proposed the rapid conclusion of the Abyssinian War by ceding to Mussolini two-thirds of Abyssinian territory.[167]In return Abyssinia would be allowed a narrow corridor that reached to the sea. A storm of public indignation and shock greeted the publication of these "peace proposals" which represented a flagrant violation of the Government's election promises and an indication of the low esteem in which the League was really held in Conservative eyes. Articles in, and letters to, *The Times* illustrate even the Conservative disgust at such plans.[168] Hoare resigned to be replaced by Eden, who did in fact apply pressure at Geneva for oil sanctions but French intransigence prevented this. Italian aggression continued unabated and in May 1936, Abyssinia was annexed to the Italian crown. In June the intentions of the Conservatives were no longer veiled -- in the words of the Chancellor, Chamberlain, to continue sanctions would be "the very midsummer of madness."[169] In July the League lifted sanctions altogether.

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[165] Anthony Eden, *Facing The Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962), pp. 279-280; L.S. Amery, *My Political Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), III, p. 174.

[166] Quoted in Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, p. 133.

[167] The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Robert Vansittart, played a major role in the situation. As a Francophile, and in this typical of the Foreign Office at the time, he advocated a hard line against Hitler. Mindful of the need to maintain Italy's friendship as prompted by the Stresa front (which was seen by both Britain and France as a guarantee against potential aggressive acts by Hitler) since Mussolini at that time was on bad terms with Hitler and with the view that it was essential for Britain to have a friendly Italy on the Mediterranean, Vansittart worked closely with Hoare to gain a solution to the Abyssinian crisis which was favourable to Italy. One author has brought attention to the belief that the Hoare-Laval Pact was in effect the Grandi-Vansittart Plan. (Grandi was the Italian ambassador to London). See Ian Colvin, *Vansittart in Office*, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1965), pp. 57-91.

The implications of the Italio/Abyssinian war were far reaching. The League was effectively wrecked by the intransigence of both the French and the British governments, who, between them "allowed the best practical instrument hitherto created for maintaining peace to become rusty and finally useless."[170] The disclosure of the Hoare-Laval Pact had revealed Conservative foreign policy for what it was; a continuation of the Conservative tradition of determination to make no commitments on the continent. The sudden switch to support of the League and collective security with a policy of sanctions had been sufficient to convince the electorate to re-elect the

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[168] *The Times*, 16 December, 1935. Also the *Manchester Guardian*, 13 December, 1935.
[169] Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, p. 562.
[170] Brittain, *Testament*, p. 118.

Conservatives, but the insincerity of this changed image provoked vehement accusations from the Labour Party that the Government's double policy had lowered the prestige of Britain, weakened the League and imperiled peace.[171]

British public opinion can be here judged to have been at its most effective, but only in terms of effect on government pronouncements, not of government policy. The results of the Peace Ballot had appeared just as the Abyssinian crisis erupted, and can be seen to have been instrumental in persuading Baldwin to make official professions that the League was the keystone of British foreign policy. Baldwin also used Hoare as a scapegoat for the sake of public opinion; he spoke of "the ground of conscience and of honour" and of the "deeper feeling" that had been manifested as a result of what was essentially double dealing on the part of the government.[172] It was to his own advantage that he should stress the effect of public opinion in Hoare's downfall, since to do otherwise would have been to accept responsibility for Hoare's actions. He was, as one author has written, "the sacrificial victim for the Conservative Cabinet."[173] In this case however, "vox populi spoke in unison with the politicians", and it was the prime motivator.[174] This is reinforced on consideration that public opinion was against the ultimate ending of sanctions, but it achieved no effect.

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[171] 313 H.C. Deb., June 23, 1936 col. 1605.
[172] 307 H.C. Deb., December 19, 1935, cols. 2030-39.
[173] George, *Hollow Men*, p. 88.
[174] Waley, *British Public Opinion*, p. 139.

The basic differences in foreign policy between that followed by the Conservative governments and that advocated by both the Labour Party and the peace movement were by now obvious. The Peace Ballot had exhibited the willingness of the public to countenance sanctions, and military sanctions if necessary. That such action would necessitate an increased defence programme was acknowledged by the Labour Party at its 1935 annual conference.[175] The general election of 1935 had been won by the Conservatives essentially on their professed belief in the League and the system of collective security. These events are indicative that public opinion, by now unusually informed about foreign affairs, was ever more strongly in favour of the League and the principles of coercionist collective security. Appeasement of the dictators, as pursued by the Conservative governments, was a totally different approach than collective security against aggression, as advocated by the Labour Party and the peace movement. The hardening of public opinion after the Abyssinian affair had been sufficiently strong to impress upon Baldwin the need to be *seen* to be in favour of the League and collective security, whilst in reality he disregarded this strength of feeling and yet could offer no alternative to replace the sanctionist policy. For appeasement of the dictators which he began with his reaction to Mussolini's aggression did not form a concrete policy. Rather it turned into a situation of 'muddling through' subsequent crises, which in Hitler's case, were embarked upon on the obvious evidence that Britain really had no effective policy for dealing with such crises. There is ample evidence for this view in the examination of reaction to the ensuing crisis, the militarisation of the Rhineland. In doing this, Hitler had broken the treaties of Versailles and Locarno, yet the Conservatives failed to apply either economic or military sanctions. Rather they preferred the approach of appeasement, dealing with this case on its own merits, and disregarding the wider implications within the international sphere. A majority of the Conservative leadership sysmpathised with Germany, who, after all, was only 'going into her back garden'. Baldwin once again used public opinion to justify his own reluctance to stand firm in commitments which might mean war: "If there is one chance in a hundred that war would follow ... I have not the right to commit England".[174] Yet it was realised at the time that public opinion, as represented by the Peace Ballot and in support of Labour were fully prepared to shoulder the risks and responsibilities of a collective safeguarding of peace, "and were now prepared to contemplate war against Fascist or

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[175] This decision resulted from a showdown between Ernest Bevin, who represented the majority in supporting League action even at the risk of war, and George Lansbury, the Party leader and an absolute pacifist.

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[174] Quoted in W.S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 188.

Nazi tyranny."[177] This attitude was strengthened by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The toppling of the democratically elected Republican government by reactionary forces widened the existing division between Government and Opposition and reaffirmed the switching of sides over peace and war. The Opposition and the peace movement became fervently war minded whilst the Government retreated still further from the prospect of war and seemed prepared to pay any price for peace. There were mass defections from the established peace groups (which lost such figures as Fenner Brockway, Stephen Spender and John Middleton Murray), particularly from the socialist inspired ones, men who, having watched the demise of the League and the Government's determination to appease the aggressor rather than confront him, were no longer able to equate democracy and socialism with non-violence. The Labour Party demanded intervention and rearmament[178] and the banner of pacifism passed to the Government. Neutrality and non-intervention were the order of the day for the Conservatives, who did not want to become entangled in the "exceptional circumstances of the conflict."[179] That these circumstances were exceptional in terms of a perceived clash between fascism and communism, with Conservative sympathy behind the former, will be examined below.

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[177] Ibid., p. 169. See also Windrich, *British Labour's Foreign Policy*, pp. 150-51.

[178] A. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin* (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 594.

[179] George, *Hollow Men*, p. 116.

The path to Munich was signposted by the international crises of the 1930s, and by the consistency of the Conservative attitude towards them. The argument that it was the pacifist mood of the country as described in the previous chapter which had led Baldwin to initiate what was to become the long-term 'policy' of appeasement is invalidated on examining the Conservative attitude to foreign affairs during the 1930s. Public opinion did not figure very large in the Conservative scheme of things. That they were aware of the rising tide of pacifism as evidenced in support for the League and collective security was made obvious by their 1935 election campaign, when they professed faith in the League and a determination to base their foreign policy in keeping with the principles enshrined in the Covenant. But professments were not translated into policy, and in Manchuria, Abyssinia, the Rhineland and Spain the Conservatives repeatedly by-passed the League, refused to take advantage of the potential for peace which existed in the League machinery, and embarked on a policy of do-nothing which resulted in appeasement.

C. Appeasement as a manifestation of traditional Tory policy

It is important to recognize that just as Labour's foreign policy could be said to have as a principal tenet internationalism, and as such was in harmony with the interests of the peace movement, so Conservative foreign policy was based on an implicit belief in the benefits of isolationism -- the reverse of internationalism and thus most decidedly contrary to the interests of the peace movement. There are three main distinguishing features which characterize Conservative foreign policy during the inter-war period:

(i)Dislike of continental entanglments:

Traditional Tory statesmanship was marked by a dislike of European entanglments. In the words of Lord Salisbury, Foreign Secretary at the turn of the century:

> Except during (Napoleon I's reign) we have never been in danger, and, therefore, it is impossible for us to judge whether the "isolation" under which we are supposed to suffer, does or does not contain in it any element of peril. It would hardly be wise to incur novel and most onerous obligations, in order to guard against a danger in whose existence we have no historical reason for believing.[180]

This empiricism was as pertinent in the inter-war years as it was then, and lay behind the Conservative rejection of the concept of a collective security system which Labour tried so hard to establish in the 1920s. The Geneva Protocol was rejected on the grounds that the Conservative government could not accept the 'excessive obligations' it enshrined; the Kellogg/Briand Pact was only ratified in the light of reservations which stipulated that it did not restrict the right of self-defence where the interests of the Empire were concerned; and the Conservative governments had repudiated pledges inherent in the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant to disarm. The Conservatives were still living in the days of the Empire, rather than in Europe. This habit of mind dictated not looking too far ahead but dealing with each foreign policy issue as it arose -- as events of the 1930s were to show. "In this ... we see the decadence of British empiricism, empiricism carried beyond all rhyme or reason."[181] Historian A.L. Rowse posits an enlightening distinction which may explain why the Conservative tradition came unstuck in the 1930s: he argues that the Conservative leaders were essentially middle-class, and did not have the same hereditary sense of the security of the state, such as the aristocrats Churchill, Eden or Cecil. "They came at the end of the ascendancy of the Victorian middle class, deeply affected as that was by high mindedness and humbug."[182] Ignorant of European affairs, and lacking the in-born conception of Britain's role in the world, the Conservative governments of the 1920s and 1930s effectively brought the tradition to a stumbling close.

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[180] Quoted in Lord Strang, *Briain in World Affairs. A Survey of the Fluctuations in British Power and Influence* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), p. 249.

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[181] A.L. Rowse, *All Souls and Appeasement* (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 115.

[182] Ibid., p. 116.

(ii) Anti-Soviet motives for policy:

The importance of anti-communism as a motive of Conservative policy has been much discussed;[143] discarding the extremist views that Conservative foreign policy centred on the issue or that it had no place in the minds of the decision makers, it must be acknowledged as a relevant issue. The Conservatives, protectors of traditional privilege and the rights of property, had an inherent mistrust of the Soviet Union and communism, and had been considerably frightened by the revolutionary shudders of the General Strike of 1926. During the 1930s in particular the thought of endorsing a system of collective security which might entail fighting in a war on the side of the Soviet Union against Germany was not too pleasing. The neutrality stance adopted by the Government during the Spanish Civil War was prompted by the fear that "If the Government wins in Spain, they will be superseded by the Communists."[144] Given a choice between siding with the forces of fascism or communism, then the Conservatives would have chosen the former. A.L. Rowse was perhaps not too far from the truth when he commented: "there was a fatal confusion in their minds between the interests of their social order and the interests of their country."[185] The maintenance of this attitude was aided by Hitler, who actively identified himself with the struggle against bolshevism.

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[143] For differing views on this, see George, *Hollow Men*, and D.L. Lammers, *Explaining Munich; The Search for Motive in British Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

[144] George, *Hollow Men*, p. 118.

(iii) Conservative sympathy with Germany:

Leftists were not alone within Britain in thinking the Treaty of Versailles too harsh, Conservatives were also of this opinion. Their concern was that the debilitating provisions of the Treaty prevented German re-entry onto the European scene to restore the balance of power. Complementing this view was a basic and deep-seated mistrust of the French, and the Conservative decision that Britain had not fought the Great War to prevent German mastery in Europe only to see France assume that mastery in Germany's place. Thus there was a considerable amount of sympathy for Germany throughout the inter-war period. This is partly bound up with the previous point and helps explain the persistance of the Conservatives in being unable to perceive of Hitler as a threat during the 1930s.

To refer back to May's analysis of policy derived from axiomatic beliefs and that from means-ends calculations, it is clear how far Conservative foreign policy was based on formulations derived from means-ends calculations. These involved the maintenance of an isolationist stance, with no European entanglements entailing excessive obligations, the return of Germany to the community of nations to counteract

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[185] Rowse, *All Souls*, p. 116.

French power, and, as was later perceived, to hold back the communist threat, and the attempt to avoid war at all costs. Was this a policy in keeping with the beliefs of the peace movement?

VI. CONCLUSION

The academic literature on the impact of public opinion on governmental policy is extensive; that of the effect of interest groups not so extensive. Neither are all-illuminating. Indeed the general theme which may be detected in most studies is that they deal with generalities and vague unsubstantiated assumptions.[186] The classic studies completed in the 1950s and 1960s[187] are still the most authoritative and enlightening. Little of the literature produced since then in either book or article form has extended the bases of knowledge formulated by scholars such as Almond or Rosenau.[188] Faced with obstacles that purport to discount any linkages between public opinion and foreign policy, writers have devised such concepts as the "latent veto" of which policy makers should beware.[189]

As a more useful method of research, the use of case studies may well prove more enlightening in the long term for the construction of predictive theories concerning the public's influence. Political Scientist Harry Eckstein is certainly of this opinion.[190] However, disadvantages accrue to this method also; in this particular case study, it is easier to be descriptive rather than to be prescriptive. However trite it may sound, the historical period in question was unique in so far as the confluence of events and characteristics is concerned, and, as Sydney Verba pointed out, "we end with an explanation tailored to each case."[191] Even if a lesson could be learned from this epoch, then it is unlikely that a chance would ever occur in the future to apply it. If history is only repeated by those so foolish as not to remember the past, then a governmental policy of appeasement will never again be followed, as was witnessed in the recent instance of the Falklands War.

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[186] Much is made of this point in Cohen, *The Public's Impact*, pp. 8-19.

[187] James N. Rosenau, *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (New York: The Free Press, 1967) and *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*; Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*.

[188] If it has been dealt with at all: a perusal of periodicals reveals a veritable dearth of articles on the topic; during the last ten years no relevant article has appeared in either *World Politics* or *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and only four in the *American Political Science Review* and two in *International Studies Quarterly* could be loosely construed as dealing with public opinion and foreign policy.

[189] See Cohen, *The Public's Impact*, pp. 16-17.

However, since the role of the peace movement during the inter-war years has to be judged in the final analysis in terms of the effect it had, if any, on public opinion and on government policy, and in an assessment of this effect, then certain questions must be addressed:

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[190] See Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science", in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds. *Handbook of Political Science Vol. 7.*, (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1975), pp. 79-137.

[191] Sydney Verba, "Some Dilemmas in Comparative Research" in *World Politics*, 20:1 (October, 1967):113.

1. Was the peace movement effective?[192]

The peace movement comprised many interest groups -- the No-Conscription Fellowship (later the No More War Movement), the Fellowship of Conciliation, the League of Nations Union, the Union of Democratic Control and the Peace Pledge Union -- to name but the most prominent. These groups achieved a certain amount of cohesiveness under the umbrella of the National Peace Council, and made the movement a considerable force. Did it amount to a mere expenditure of intellectual energy, or did it have some effect?

(i)In terms of public opinion:

The acceptance of Almond's classic differentiation between the attentive public and the mass public would lead to the assumption that there would be little possibility of extending the interest of the attentive public to the disinterested masses; obviously, or the grounds for the differentiation would no longer exist. However, the findings of this study would imply that the peace movement was effective in mobilising mass public support for its aims, thus closing the gap between the attentive public and the body of the masses. Such an effect occurred gradually over the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s: in the immediate post war years there existed the hard core of movements which had been born prior to and during the War, such as the N-CF and the FoR. These were reactions against war by what could be considered 'extreme' pacifists; those who held beliefs with sufficient strength and devotion which made them elevate the obligations of their faiths above all other obligations, in this case civil. The civil obligation was fighting for King and Country, and the faiths in point were, for the members of the N-CF, of a socialist nature, and for the FoR of a Christian kind. Such 'extreme' movements tended to lose impetus at the end of the War, since conscription was no longer so important an issue as readjusting to a post-war world. The 1920s saw sporadic evidence of pacifist thought, such as Lord Arthur Ponsonby's campaign in 1925, and of course the continuation since the War of the UDC, but public awareness was not really activated until the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the so-called hey-day of British pacifism, as detailed in Chapter Three, is overwhelming evidence that the expanded peace movement managed to mobilize a large portion of the British population. Proof of this exists on three levels: in terms of the intellectual elite the evidence can be found in the Oxford Union resolution of October 1933 and the subsequent resolutions along the same lines held at other universities countrywide. As regards the voting public, then there are the series of by-elections in 1933 which demonstrated a massive swing against the National government, and disatisfaction at their prevarication on issues of peace and disarmament. Even for the mass, uninterested public there is evidence that they were unusually aware of foreign policy issues with the results of the Peace Ballot.

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[192] To prevent semantic confusion, the word 'effect' will be taken as indicating influence, both positive and negative, as outlined in the introduction. Thus the question could be rephrased "was the peace movement effective in achieving influence?"

Thus there was a process of escalatory influence during the inter-war years whereby the peace movement did achieve some influence outside of the realm of the attentive public.

(ii)In terms of government policy:

As previously recognised in Chapter One, owing to the difficulties implicit in assessing the impact of interest groups and public opinion on foreign policy, this question is one which is difficult to determine conclusively. It will be useful to consider in two parts; firstly as regards the Labour governments and secondly the Conservative governments.

(a)The Labour Governments: It could be initially assumed that the peace movement did have an effective input and thus positive influence into the political system whilst Labour were in office; those policies followed by the Labour government, based on the principles of international cooperation through the League, peaceful settlement of disputes and disarmament, were exactly those advocated by the peace movement. But it is difficult to assess how far the peace movement was responsible for this policy theme since such aspects could be explained as facets of socialist foreign policy, which Labour would have enacted in the absence of pressure from the peace movement, as will be exemplified below.

(b)The Conservative Governments: The question of input into Conservative policy is perhaps easier to answer, in that the peace movement achieved little effect. The success of any influence would have been reflected in policy making, and as has been shown, there was little similarity between those policies advocated by the peace movement and those pursued by the Conservative governments. The Conservatives did not ascribe to the principles of collective security, or have very much faith in the League, pusuing instead the incremental policy of appeasement. There is one exception to this however, in the case of the 1935 election campaign. That the importance of the peace movement as influencers of the electoral mood was recognised can be illustrated by the Conservative volte-face during the said campaign, when, suddenly the Conservative Party ran on the platform of faith in the League. This can be perceived as negative influence, in so far as the Conservatives were constrained in what they could offer as potential policies should they be re-elected; however, since their conversion to the League was insincere, and not carried through into policy making, it could not be transformed into positive influence.

2. Why was it effective as regards public opinion?
To assume that the peace movement extended its influence to the general mass public is to acknowledge the fact that the mass public were unusually (according to the majority of studies on interest groups and public opinion) well informed

as regards foreign affairs and the potential for disaster if the principles of collective security and disarmament as enshrined in the League, failed. This high degree of interest and knowledge can be attributed to two factors -- the educating impact of the LNU and the changing international situation.

(i)The effect of the LNU:

The LNU established itself as the educator of public opinion in terms of the importance of the League for future peaceful international relations, and indeed fulfilled this mission well. Claiming half a million members, it was clearly the largest single grouping in the peace movement.[193] The international scene during the 1920s was relatively calm, and thus hopes were high that the birth of the League heralded the end of international anarchy, and international peace and cooperation could become realistic components of the international system. Certainly influential in gaining the support of British public opinion through the many meetings of its various branches and through the official magazine, Headway, it had a charismatic leader in the form of Lord Cecil of Chelwood, an enthusiastic supporter of pacifism. Ramsey MacDonald acknowledged the important role Cecil played:

> You have ploughed a long and very successful furrow, and those who think that peace is one of the major issues of the world today, and that it can only be

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[193] Berkman, *Pacifism in England*, p. 81.

> secured through an influential League of Nations, will never be able to thank you too much for your services.'[114]

In so far as the LNU was the official offshoot of the League this enabled it to obtain more publicity and exposure than the other groups within the peace movement, and thus it had a greater potential for furthering the cause of pacifism.

(ii)The changing international situation:

The awakening of public consciousness to events in the international sphere was to engender another reason for the growing pacifist impulse. The groundwork for the mobilisation of the mass public, due mainly to the LNU, took place within the 1920s -- a relatively calm period of readjustment after the War, gradual easing of hostile feelings towards Germany and the high hopes for a peaceful future. Thus when crises began to occur, as they did during the early 1930s, public opinion was aware of the implications of such, and could respond in a positive form, as outlined in Chapter Three. A previous study, in an attempt to elucidate the characteristics of pacifism during the 1930s, has drawn on a sociological study of the peace movement, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, in Britain during the 1960s, and applied this thesis to the inter-war years.[115] The sociological study notes the necessity of making a distinction in the structure of the bases of support of the movement between activists and sympathisers. Activists, as the name implies, are those who are involved on a positive level within the movement, and are not only card carrying members but are actively involved, attending demonstrations and participating in other forms of protest. Sympathisers are those who may not be members of the movement, but who agree with the basic aims of it. This group does not involve itself in the activities of the movement.The social and psychological pressures implicit in activism may deter some from going beyond the boundaries of being sympathisers. How far sympathisers will be attracted to the cause will depend on the extent to which the issue in concern is at the forefront of the public mind. This is reminiscent of the conclusions of the study by Kenneth Boulding, that protest is effective only in a society which is in some sense "supersaturated" with respect to that issue.''‘ Since the atomic bomb was never a matter of pressing public concern during the heyday of the CND, supporters were by implication activists. Likewise during the 1920s, the pacifist movement had a hard core of activists, but few sympathisers. The international situation was looking brighter in 1925 with the Locarno treaties than it had since the War, thus people saw no need

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[114] Letter, J. R. MacDonald to Lord Cecil, Dec. 19, 1931, Public Record Office, Ramsey MacDonald Papers, PRO 30/69, 677, fs. 143-47.

[115] See Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 225. He makes use of the study done by Dr. Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).

''‘Kenneth Boulding, "Reflections on Protest.", *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, October 1965, 18-20. Cited in H. & A. Newcombe, *Peace Research Around the World* (Ontario: Canadian Peace Research Institute, 1972), p. 178.

to be expressive of a fear which in their minds, was unfounded. However, in the 1930s, with the deterioration of the international situation, war became a real fear, and as an issue which could not be ignored, attracted sympathisers. Thus there is almost a knock-on effect in that those educative and informative groups within the peace movement alerted the public mind to foreign affairs, which, during the 1930s and in the light of successive crises, became participants in the peace movement themselves.

3. Why was it effective with the Labour governments?

Mention has already been made of the basic difficulty in assessing the real importance of the peace movement with regard to Labour governmental policies; these coterminous policies were essentially a function of the ideology of the Labour Party in terms of socialist foreign policy. Internationalism, with the emphasis laid on a community of nations and the end of power politics, with conciliation, arbitration and disarmament as the three legs of policy were a manifestation of socialist foreign policy. The peace movement was advocating policies which the Labour governments would have pursued in any case; thus the success of the peace movement's input into the political process when Labour was in office is difficult to judge given the closely intertwining ideals held by each. On consideration of the interchange of leaders within the peace movement, the ILP and the Labour Party, the matter is further obfuscated;

it could be concluded that the input, if any, was achieved since the leading members of the peace movement were members of the political elite, and therefore able to influence and direct policy.

4. Why was it not effective with the Conservative governments?

That the peace movement achieved little input into Conservative policy is hardly surprising; the general theme of internationalism was in direct opposition to the traditional Conservative belief in the worth of isolationism and dislike of European entanglements. The rejection of a collective security system as embodied in the League was merely a reflection of this tradition, just as appeasement was an empirical response in keeping with the tenets of non-involvement so characteristic of Conservative policy. The peace movement represented a threat to the status quo of the balance of power, and as such could not have hoped to have positive influence on Conservative foreign policy.

After such a consideration, the supposition that the peace movement had any effect on government policy is thrown into serious doubt. If, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the strength and purpose of the movement in the 1930s, the hey-day of British pacifism, it could achieve no input into the political process governed by the Conservatives, then one is led to question the influence it obtained in the

1920s. And to acknowledge that the Labour Party when in office did pursue policies advocated by the peace movement, is merely to recognise that such policies were integral to socialist foreign policy, as opposed to being reflective of the input of the peace movement. In this respect, the study confirms the accepted view that "interest group influence on foreign policy is slight."[197] However, the findings do not conform to the traditional mode in so far as the attentive public as represented by the various groups within the peace movement did manage to spread their influence to the mass public. Having concluded that the peace movement did not in fact have any significant input into the British political process of the inter-war years, this allows for a refutation of several classic arguments aimed at the peace movement.[198]

A. That the peace movement led to appeasement:

As was described in Chapters Three and Four the peace movement did not support appeasement. On the contrary, during the 1930s it was the most consistent and outspoken opponent of such a policy. The different peace groups were not blind to the threat of fascism, rather it seemed they recognised the potential evils before the Conservative policy makers, whose traditional policy of friendship with Germany blinded them to the truth. The supporters of peace, by this time those in the established peace groups and a large proportion of the mass public, provoked the Government into resisting Italian aggression against Abyssinia, and outraged public opinion was largely responsible for the abandonment of the Hoare-Laval Pact, and the subsequent resignation of Hoare. The Spanish Civil War marked a turning point for many pacifists, who left the peace movement and went to fight in Spain or help organise its military resistance. The Conservative government was adopting pacifism in refusing to confront aggression, and this fact, combined with the demise of the League convinced many pacifists to change their allegiances. The peace movement's policy of resistance was one of collective security centred on the League, and when this was destroyed as it gradually was after the Manchurian crisis, then appeasement was never considered a viable alternative. When the choice between appeasement and war became clearer, the peace movement was prepared to go to war. It was not the peace movement which was for peace at any price, but the Conservatives.

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[197] Lester Milbraith, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy," in *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. by James Rosenau, p. 251.

[198] See University Defence Group, *Who Was For Munich?*, pp. 1-12.

B.That the peace movement was overwhelmingly pacifist:

To argue that the peace movement was overwhelmingly pacifist is to assume no change in the movement throughout the inter-war period. Yet its metamorphosis is quite plain; immediately after the Great War it consisted for the most part of 'extreme' groups, who, for religious and political reasons opposed war. The awakening public awareness arose partly due to the revival of the anti-war literature during the late 1920s, and manifested itself in a 'never again' attitude, born of revulsion against the War and the tremendous loss of life it caused. Such sentiments were expressed by George Orwell:

> If the English physique has declined, this is no doubt partly due to the fact that the Great War carefully selected the million best men in England and slaughtered them, largely before they had time to breed.[199]

Public opinion as expressed in the Peace Ballot, the Oxford Union resolution and the 1933 by-elections was essentially of this nature, that no international conflict could ever be worth another world war. And from 1936, the nature of this pacifist resonse was changing, as a result of the worsening international situation, the demise of the League and the policy of appeasement of the dictators pursued by the Conservative governments.

C. That the peace movement encouraged the aggressors:

This accusation has been most often directed at the Oxford Union resolution.The New York Times announced on September 26, 1939 that it could not: "help wondering to what extent Hitler's poltical policies have been influenced by a conception of the British temper based on episodes like the Oxford Pledge."[200] Such sentiments were echoed in this extract from an article by Lord Lloyd:

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[199] Orwell, *Wigan Pier*, p. 98.

> It is obviously absurd that a ridiculous resolution passed some years ago by a few Oxford boys should have had any real effect. We, in Great Britain, can appraise it at its value, but I am confident that it has had a far greater effect on the Continent and has given people to understand that this country is much more decadent than it is.[201]

As was pointed out in Chapter Three, there is little indication that this was so, or indeed that the peace movement was ever considered a sign that Great Britain would never defend herself against aggression.

Rather one should look to the pro-German sentiments held by those in prominent positions during the period. It was accepted that there were individuals in such institutions as the Foreign Office, the Bank of England and the press who were fervently pro-German and thus supporters of appeasement.[202] How far these sentiments caused the policy of appeasement cannot be dealt with here, but this, coupled with the absence of any strong policy in British government from 1931-39 gave substantial encouragement to Hitler by which the influence of the peace movement pales in insignificance.

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[200] New York Times, September 26, 1939.

[201] Rt. Hon. Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, "The Need for the Rearmament of Great Britain: its justification and scope.", *International Affairs* 15, (1936), 70.

[202] See George, *Hollow Men*, pp. 157-91.

D. That the peace movement prevented rearmament:

Unlike the Labour governments of the 1920s, the Conservative governments enjoyed a substantial majority in the Commons. From 1931-35 the figure was 500, and during 1935-39 it never fell below 250.[203] Parliamentary opposition was thus insignificant, and extra-parliamentary opposition, in the form of the peace movement, was virtually ignored. Hence there was really nothing to prevent the National government from rearming if it so wished. Admittedly, prior to 1936 disarmament was still being demanded by the peace movement, but after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and in conjunction with the Labour Party, it was actually calling for rearmament. The tardiness in rearmament was yet another manifestation of the dithering absence of policy which characterised the Conservative governments of the 1930s. The case that Czechoslovakia was sacrificed because of Britain's unpreparedness in the arms field does not fit in with the analysis of appeasement as an empirical progression, whereby each crisis was dealt with on its own merits, which in this instance meant that Chamberlain saw no reason to defend a country so far away and of which was known so little. Appeasement was not born of military unpreparedness but means-ends calculations as to the worth of each crisis.

Opposition to rearmament on the part of the peace movement was a result of two considerations "which reveal a profounder analysis of the problems of peace and war than was to be found among right-wing appeasers."[204] Firstly, it stemmed from the opinion that lasting international peace could only be secured by systematic attempts to control armed force, through a gradual process of disarmament through the League. The greatest mistake of the Conservatives was that they undermined and effectively destroyed the structure created for future prevention of war, and in doing so unquestionably *increased* the dangers of war. Secondly, it was considered that basic rearmament was no substitute for a sound foreign policy. In retrospect it is simple to judge that the peace movement's policy of sanctionist collective security against fascist aggression was the most prudent for the international situation at the time:

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[203] University Defence Group, *Who Was for Munich?*, p. 10.

> Because the supporters of the peace movements hated war, they hated Fascism which they knew to mean war. Because they rejected the simple orthodoxies of power politics, 'imperial interests', and uncontrolled competitive armaments, they pioneered the policy of collective resistance to aggression and of the indivisibility of peace. If we ask which contemporary analysis of the international situation has best stood the test of time, the answer must be that it was theirs.[205]

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[204] Ibid., p. 12.
[205] Ibid., p. 16.

Can a "lesson" be generalised from this case study which bears on foreign policy in a wider sense? It would seem to suggest that elite interest groups are capable of extending their patterns of belief to the mass public, if only when an issue is, for whatever reason, brought to the forefront of the public mind.[206] Thus the potential does exist for the mobilisation of the mass public in terms of participation, but it would seem to be outside of the control of the interest groups themselves -- that is to say it takes a crisis to stir the usually lethargic public.[207] However, the findings of the study seem to conform to the classical idea that there is very little input from interest groups into the political process, and such can only be achieved when the leaders of the interest groups have some connection with the political elite. The study may also indicate that governments have a responsiblility to be more aware of and responsive to a public mood, since failure to do this could result in the fall of the government, or more seriously, a disastrous series of policy decisions. But this is to suggest a structural change within government itself, since foreign policy making still remains confined to the highly executive form of government. This is hardly a feasible proposition for the short term, and one wonders about the prospects for the long term.

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[206] This would negate the view of Philip Converse, who wrote that "It cannot ... be claimed that the mass public shares idealogical patterns of belief with relevant elites at a specific level any more than it shares the abstract conceptual frames of reference." Philip E. Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics", in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. by David E. Apter (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 231.

[207] The concept of "crisis as catalyst" is well portrayed throughout a recent study by Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

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